2042

WWII Jeep In Action® 2042

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Don Greer 2009

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WWII Jeep

In Action® No. 2042

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Squadron Signal Publications®

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Introduction

The World War II Jeep has attained an almost mythic status in popular culture. Over time, more than 640,000 of the rugged little trucks were built. Its status results from tales of returning servicemen and wartime propaganda from the U.S. War Department and Willys-Overland Motors.

During the 1930s, as clouds of war gathered in Europe and Asia, the U.S. Army wanted to replace the horse and mechanize cavalry scouts. Motorcycles, produced by Harley-Davidson and Indian, initially found favor, but many in the Army regarded their lack of passenger and cargo-carrying capacity as a serious drawback.

The American Bantam Car Company produced the first lightweight, all-wheel-drive reconnaissance car to gain wide acceptance within the Army. The initial pilot vehicle was followed by an order for 70 similar vehicles. These vehicles were designated BRC-60.

Eight of the Bantam BRC-60 trucks featured four-wheel steering. The BRC-60 was quickly followed by an order for an improved model, the BRC-40. The BRC-40 was soon joined by similar vehicles produced by Willys and Ford Motor Company. Willys Overland Motor Co.'s version was known as the MA while Ford's was known as the GP ("G" for government vehicle, and "P" for 80-inch wheelbase).

A modest number of each model were purchased and subjected to field trials by the military. Each manufacturer's vehicle had strengths and weaknesses. The Army consequently solicited bids for an improved, standardized vehicle required to contain the best elements of each of the previous vehicles.

The new, standardized vehicle was the Willys MB. Most people consider the MB to be the definitive military Jeep.

Despite Willys being awarded the contract to produce the standardized Jeep, Ford stayed in the quarter-ton truck game. Immediately before U.S. involvement in World War II, Willys

(continued on Page 4)

Acknowledgments

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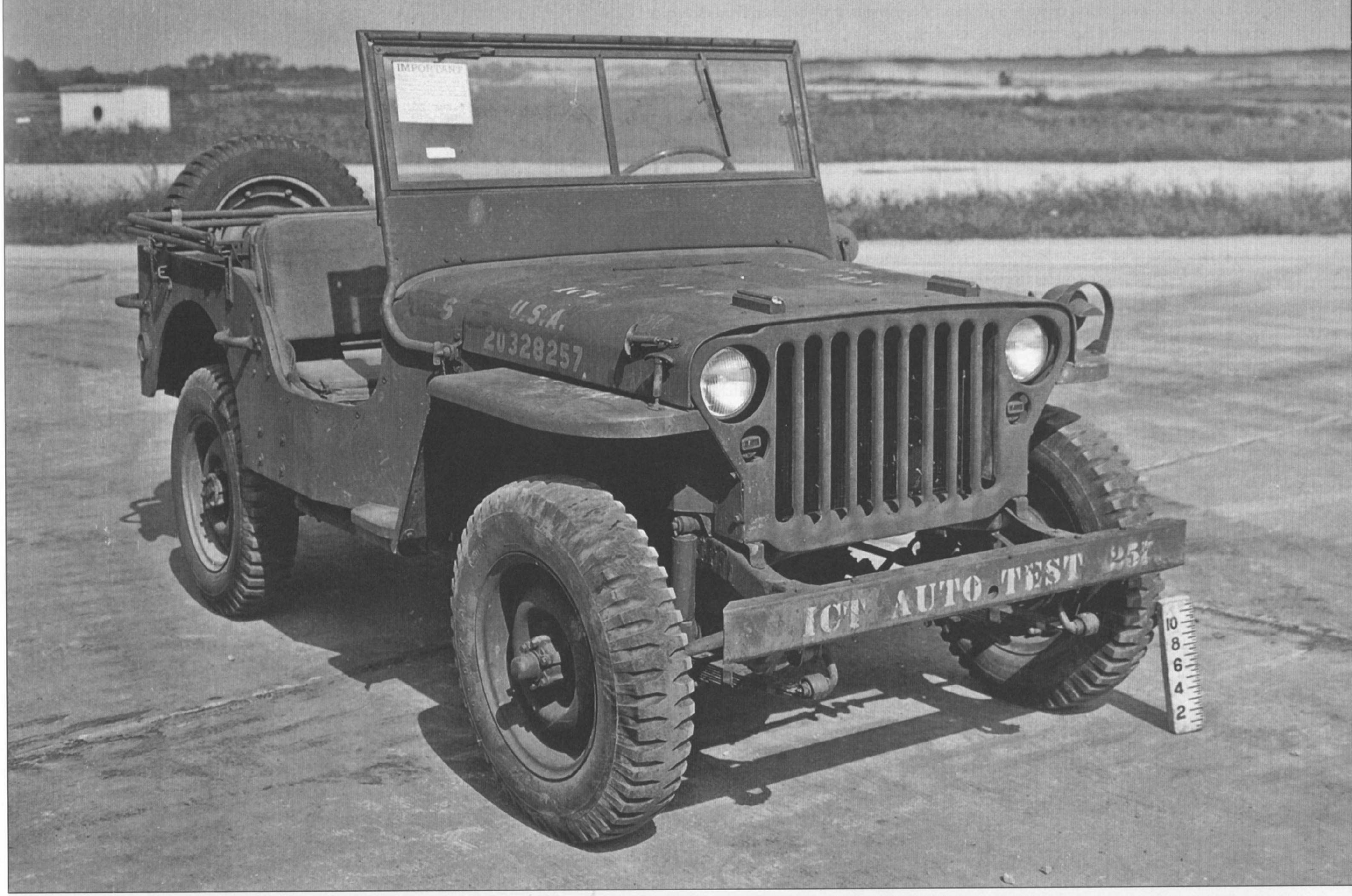
(Title Page) A long line of Jeeps prepare to move out on Stilwell Road in the China-Burma-India Theater. Willys and Ford built more than 600,000 of their respective MB and GPW models during the war. (National Archives)

(Front Cover) Hawaiian-American troops of Japanese ancestry ride patrol through the streets of Laghorn, Italy on 19 July 1944.

(Back Cover) Soldiers push their vehicle through thick mud near Nancy, France on 13 October 1944.



A Willys quarter-ton, four-by-four truck is parked during testing at Aberdeen Proving Grounds on 1 September 1943. Willys initially won the government contract to produce quarter-ton reconnaissance vehicles. Immediately before U.S. involvement in World War II, Willys faced financial and production problems. Some in the Army believed Ford Motor Company's solvency and production capacity were the solution. Consequently, Ford also produced the trucks based on the Willys model during World War II with the designation GPW.

faced financial and production capacity problems. Some in the Army believed Ford's solvency and enormous production capacity were the solution.

Accordingly, Ford was contracted to build functionally identical copies of the Willys MB. The Ford copy was given the model designation "GPW" – indicating Government vehicle, "P" – 80-inch wheelbase, "W" – Willys pattern.

The contract allowed some variance, as long as major assemblies interchanged. Whereas Willys used a heavy, welded grille that was labor intensive to produce, Ford engineer Clarence Kramer designed a stamped steel grille that was faster and less expense to produce and used less material to produce.

In 1942 Willys began using the Ford-designed grille. In 1979, Chrysler (the corporate successor to Willys) was granted a trademark on the grille designed in Ford's studios.

Over the years, the standardized Jeep's design evolved like most military vehicles. Manufacturer's names, once embossed on the vehicles, were eliminated. Windshield wipers changed from manually-operated to vacuum or electrically-operated. Brackets for fluid containers were added to the vehicle's rear, and spare-tire mounts were improved.

Regardless of maker, the Jeep was enormously popular with troops and leaders. Jeeps were active in North Africa, in Europe, on aircraft flight decks and in jungles.

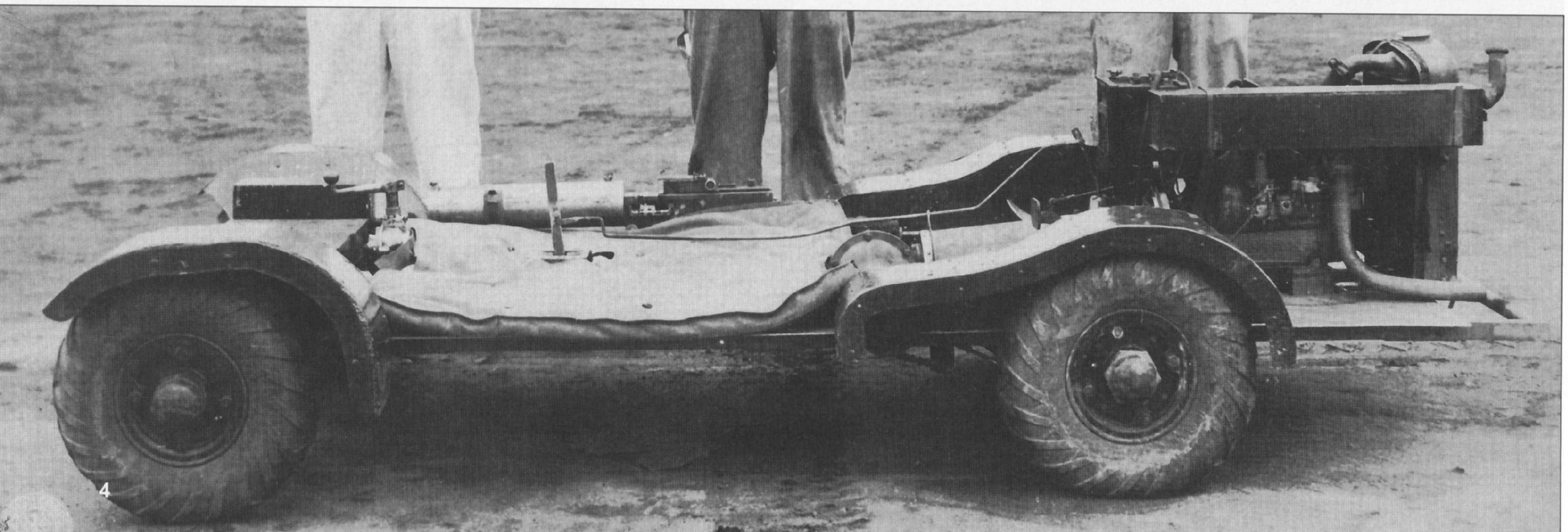
Jeeps were configured for radio gear, armed with weapons, and bore stretchers. Large numbers of Jeeps were also delivered to allied nations.

The MB and GPW continued to be used through the Korean War. Willys MC, known as the M38, was introduced during the Korean War. The M38 bore a striking resemblance to its predecessor. After only a short time, this vehicle was replaced by the Willys MD, also known as the M38A1.

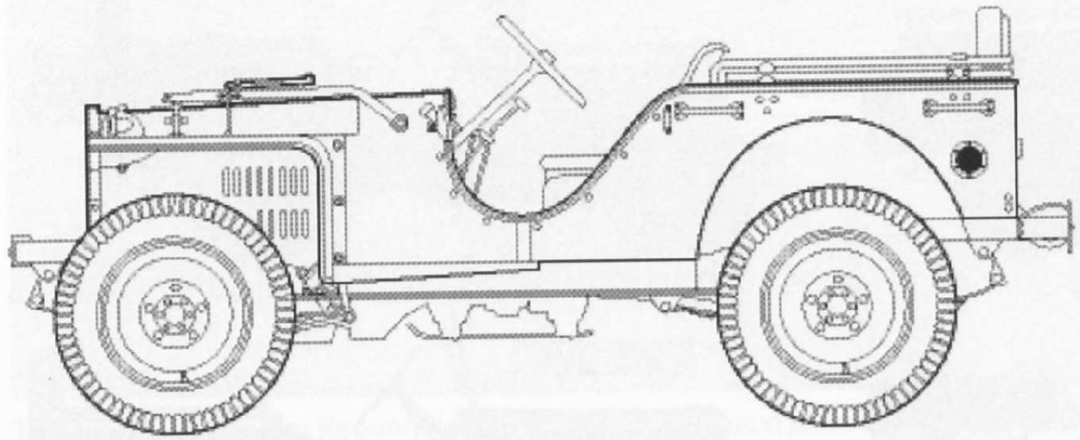
The era of the classic Jeep ended when the United States was fully involved in Vietnam and introduced the M151 series.

(Above) In the early 1930s, America's strategic planners considered the motorcycle to be the future reconnaissance vehicle. However, some in the military wanted more armament and load-carrying capabilities. (National Archives)

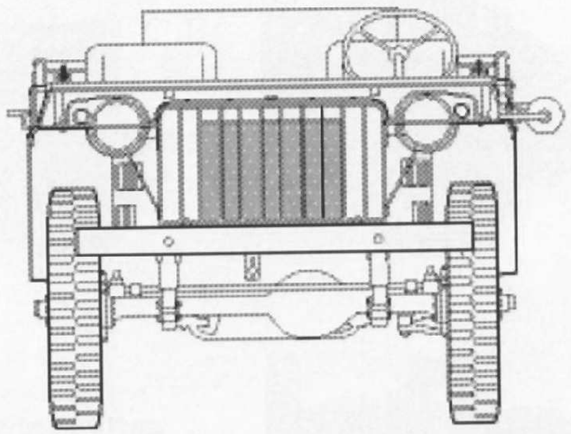
(Below) By 1937, Capt. Robert G. Howie and Master Sgt. M. Wiley had created a low-profile, lightweight machine gun carrier. It paved the way for armed, four-wheel scout vehicles. Because the crew rode in the vehicle in the prone position, it was widely known as the "Howie Belly Flopper." Only a single example was built before attention turned to a more conventional motor vehicle. Many scholars consider the low-profile, four-wheel "Howie Belly Flopper" to be the direct predecessor of the Jeep. (Robert Notman)

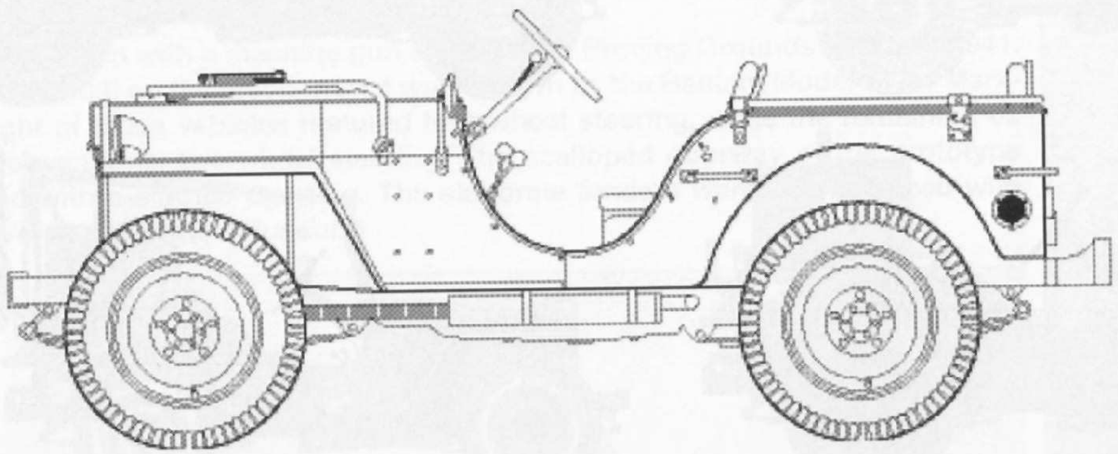


Pre-Standardized Jeep Development

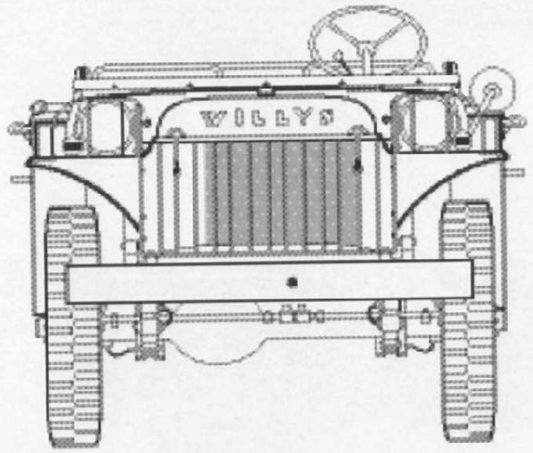


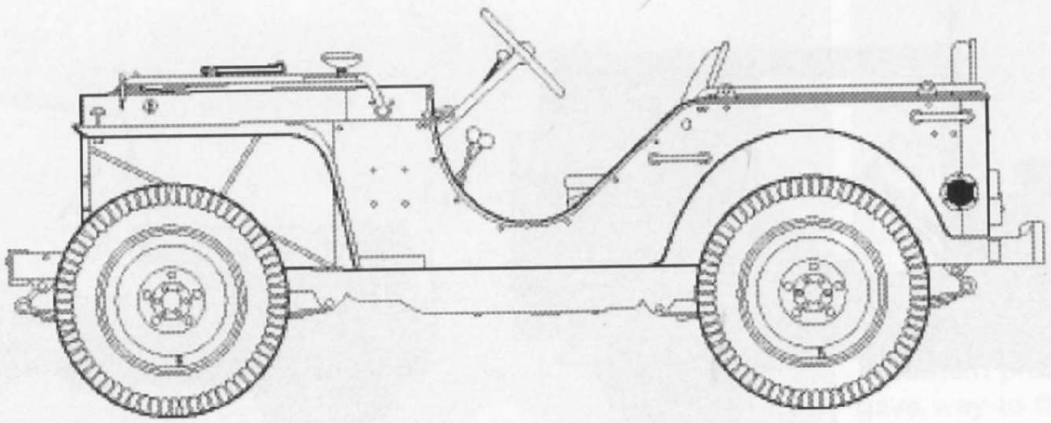
Bantam
BRC-40



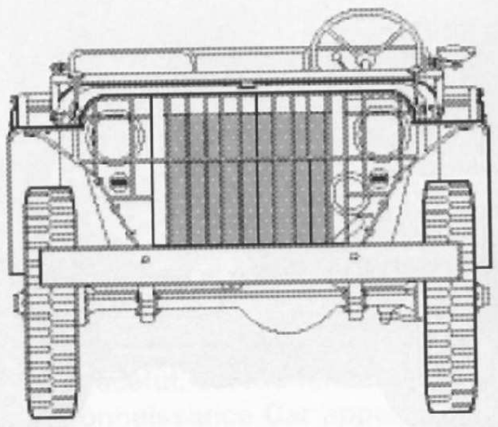


Willys
MA

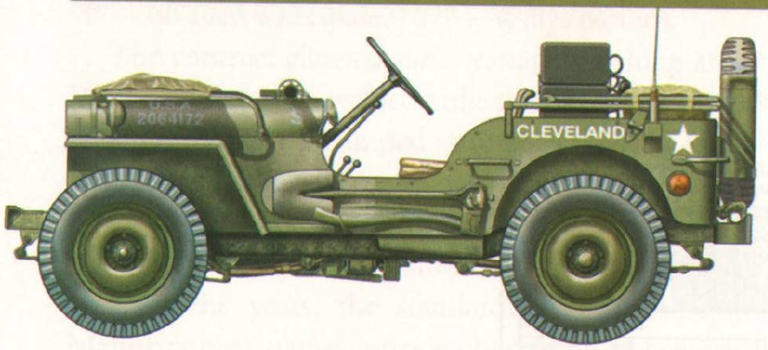


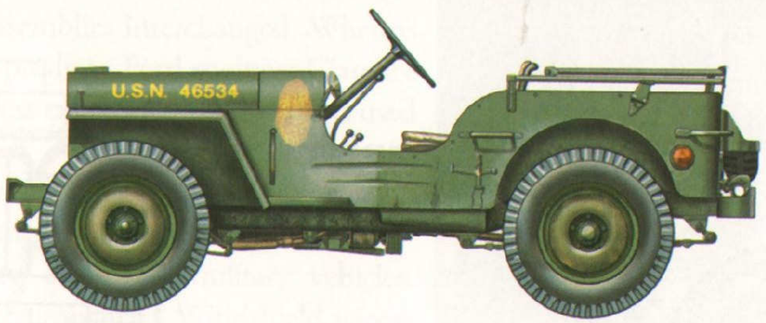


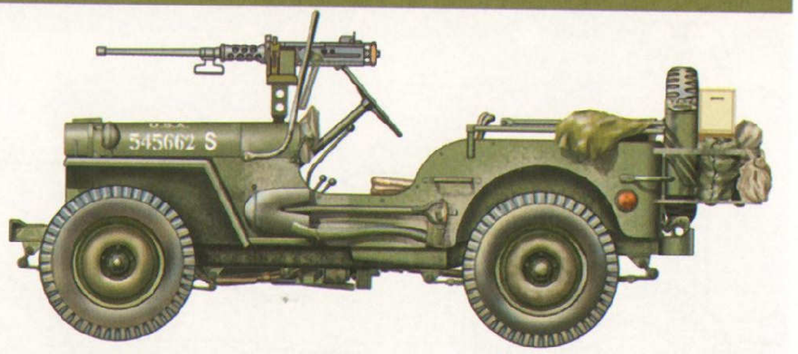
Ford
GP

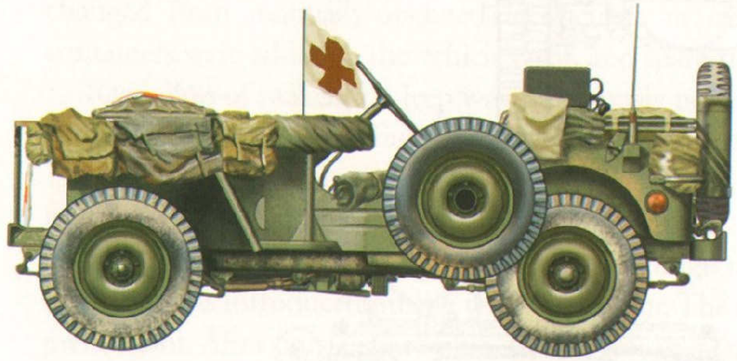


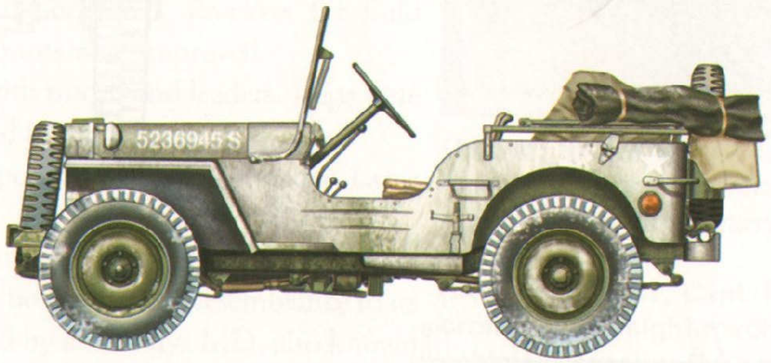
Standardized Jeep Modifications

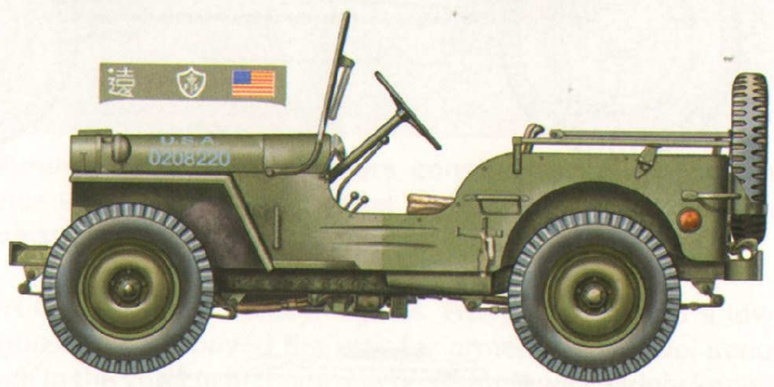


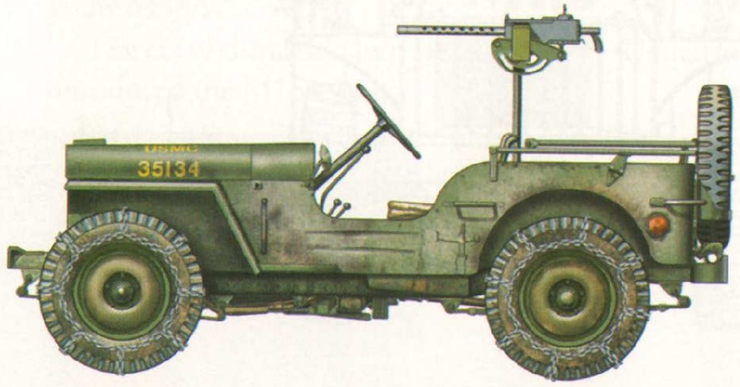


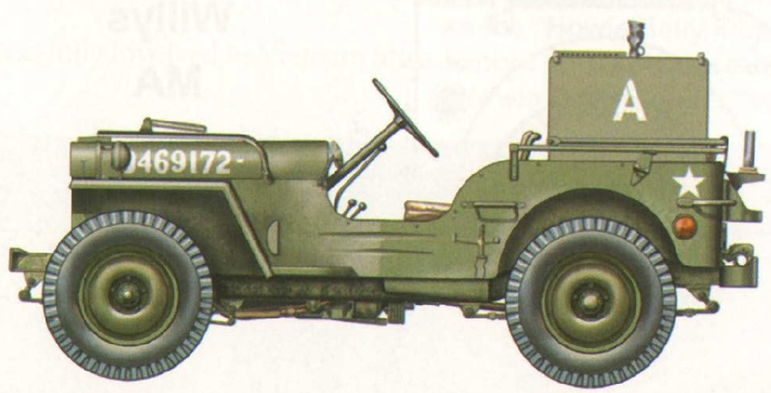


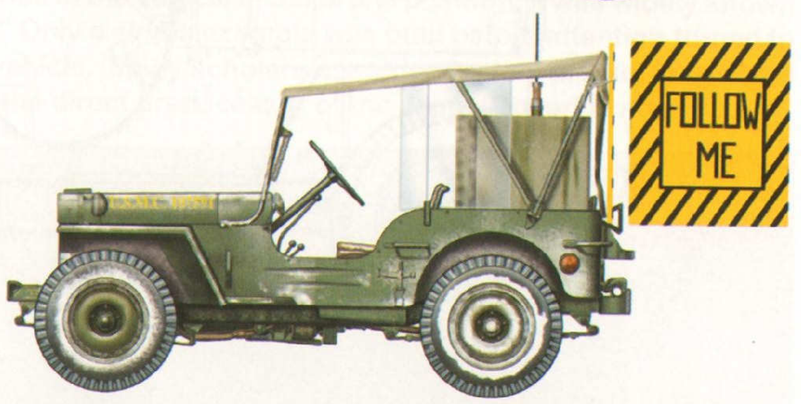


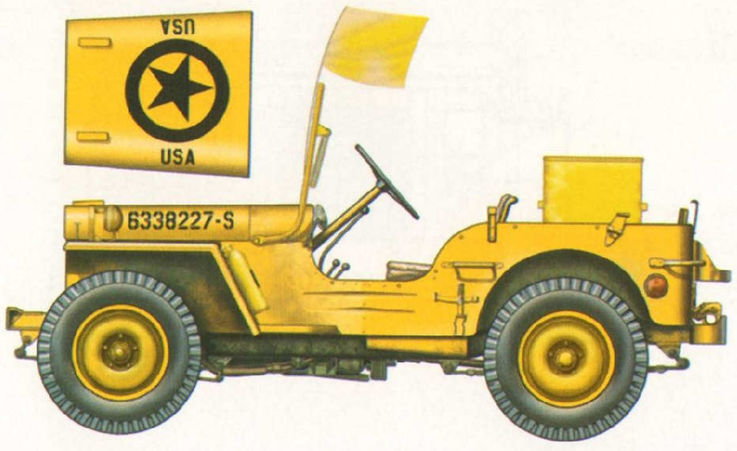


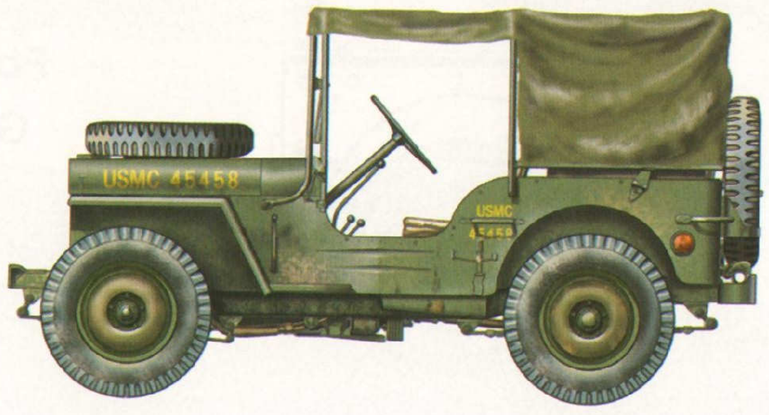


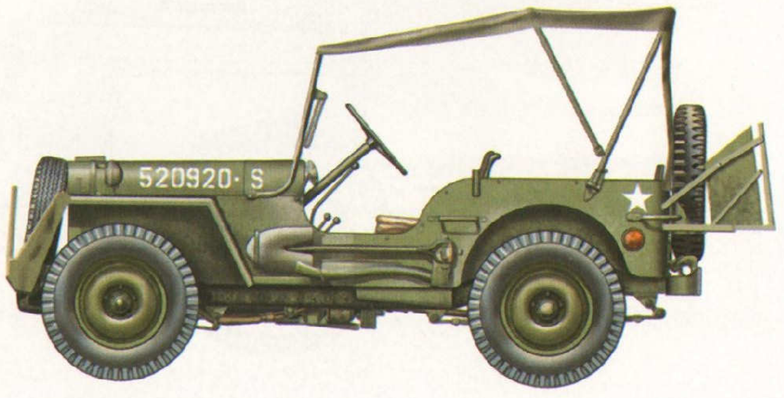










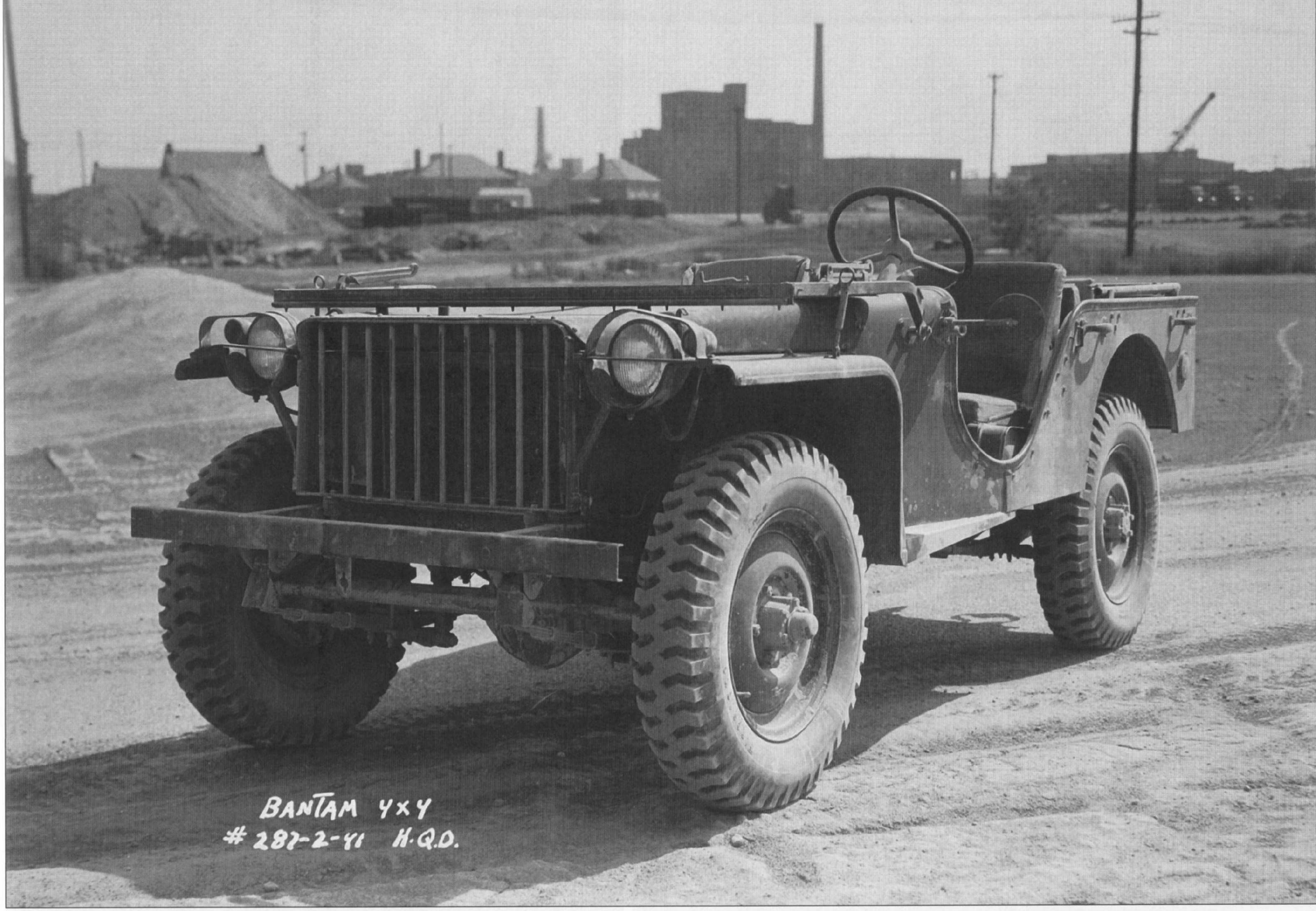


The prototype Bantam Reconnaissance Car is parked next to an Oshkosh 5-ton prototype artillery tractor. Two distinct characteristics of the Bantam prototype are the prominent headlight assemblies and the stepped doorways for the driver and front passenger. (Patton Museum)

A BRC-60 is outfitted with a machine gun at Aberdeen Proving Grounds in March 1941. The 70 vehicles built on the first contract were known as the Bantam Model 60, or Mark-II (Mk-2). Eight of these vehicles featured four-wheel steering, while the remaining 62 employed conventional two-wheel steering. The scalloped doorway of the prototype was replaced with a simpler opening. The elaborate fenders were also replaced with simple, flat versions. (Patton Museum)

A Bantam prototype at Camp Holabird displays the graceful, curved fenders that soon gave way to the characteristic flat fenders. The Reconnaissance Car appears heavily burdened by the five men inside it. (Patton Museum)

Scout troops pose for a portrait with two Bantam Mark-II, Model-60 reconnaissance vehicles and a motorcycle. The Bantams and their successors would permanently alter the role of motorcycles in the U.S. military. (Military History Institute.)



The Bantam BRC-40 resembles the traditional military Jeep more than earlier models. The Reconnaissance Car was powered by a Continental four-cylinder engine with a 112-cubic-inch displacement. The Spicer 40 axles were coupled to the engine through a three-speed Warner T-84D transmission and a two-speed Spicer transfer case.

A Bantam BRC-60 demonstrates its speed, agility, and toughness by launching into the air with a towed 37mm anti-tank gun. Jeeps proved to be eminently suited to transporting the diminutive 37mm gun into action on battlefields from the Pacific to North Africa and Europe. (National Archives)

Soldiers row a pair of Jeeps across a stream. The original specifications of the quarter-ton reconnaissance car specified a maximum weight of 1,300 pounds. Although the BRC-40 exceeded this amount by weighing 2,070 pounds, it was still light enough to be manhandled in extreme cases. (Army Motors)

The flat hood, fenders and grille were characteristic of World War II Jeeps. The Bantam BRC-40 had all these features. (Military History Institute)

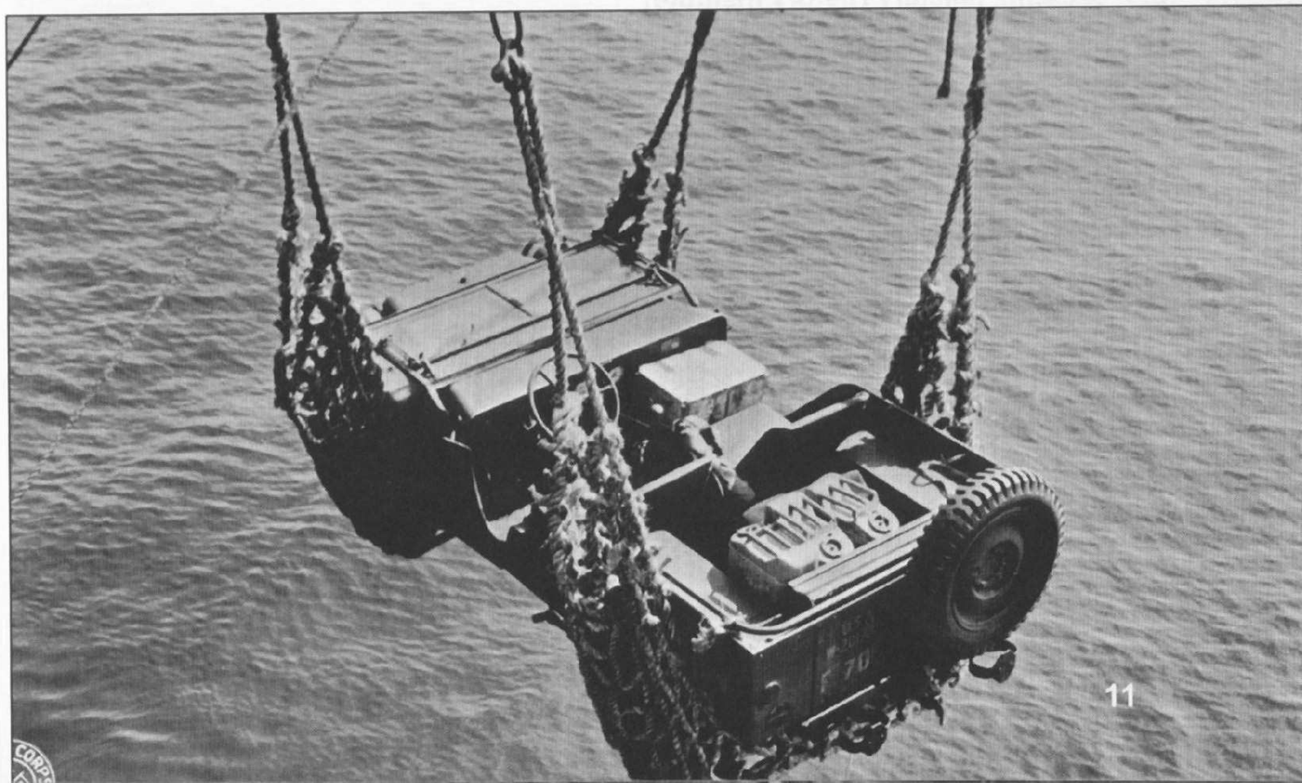
By 1941, a skidplate was added to the BRC-40 to protect the Spicer Model 18 transfer case. (Military History Institute)

The slab-sided body of the Bantam was festooned with grab handles. The handles were required specifications to allow man-handling of the vehicle. Interestingly, many people see the HMMWV as a decedent of the Jeep. However, it's unlikely the latter could be manually lifted. (Military History Institute)

A BRC-40 is fitted with a 37mm anti-tank gun in 1941. The combination was designated T2E1. During testing, this combination caused the frame to crack. As long as the U.S. military fielded quarter-ton vehicles, efforts were made to give them tank-destroyer capabilities. Recoilless rifles, Davey Crocketts and TOW systems became considerably more effective than early efforts. (Patton Museum)

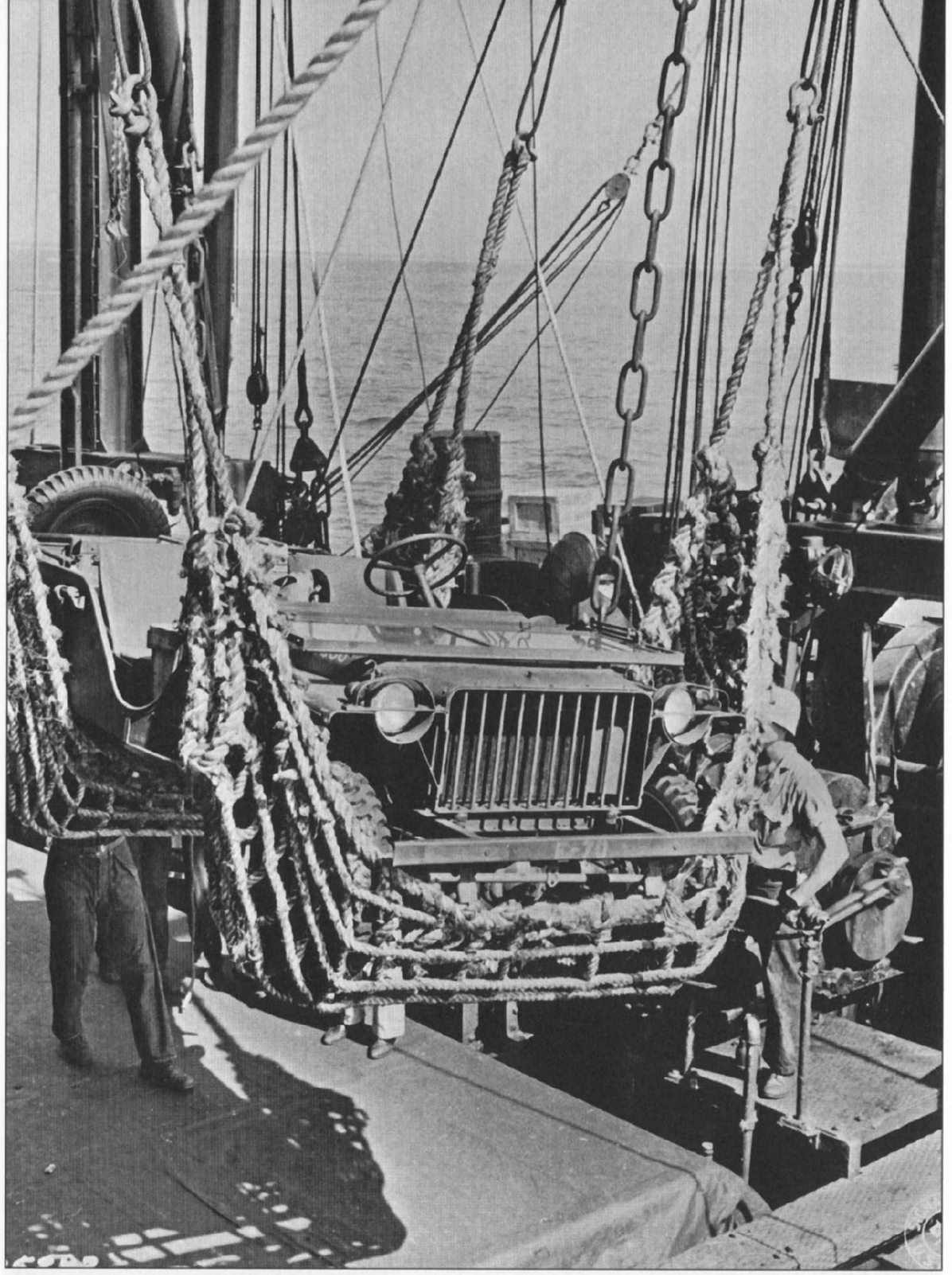
An Army chaplain uses a BRC-40 as a temporary altar. An altar cloth is spread over the hood, and a crucifix is on the windshield frame. The glass panel of the windshield has been opened, and the frame has been folded forward. (Military History Institute)

A Bantam BRC-40 is moved from a transport ship in a cargo net during amphibious training maneuvers off the North Carolina coast. (Library of Congress)



A reconnaissance team includes four BRC-40s. Two vehicles are equipped with Browning .30-caliber machine guns on dash mounts. A third vehicle (second from left) is armed with a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR). Bicycles are mounted on the right side of three Bantams. The Jeep and motorcycle riders are wearing light-colored, soft, aviator-type helmets. The Dodge half-ton command and reconnaissance car on the right has a lucky horseshoe on its grille. (Jim Gilmore collection)

One experiment equipped the quarter-ton vehicles with four-wheel steering. Bantam introduced this feature on eight BRC-60 or Mk-2 Jeeps from the first contract of 70 vehicles. Shortages of critical steering components, complexity to manufacture, and concerns for troop training and safety resulted in scrapping the four-wheel-drive-and-steer system. (Military History Institute)

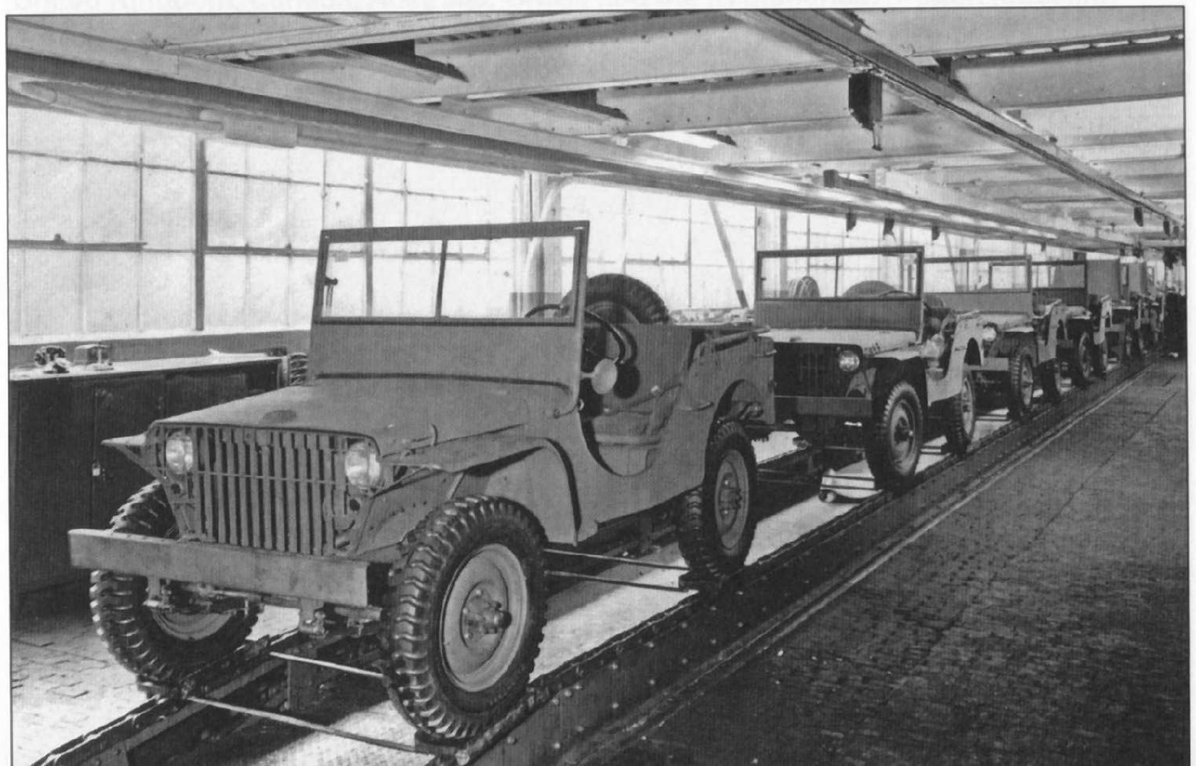


Navy crewmen steady a BRC-40 during an on-deck transfer operation. For the relatively light Jeep, simply driving its wheels onto cargo nets was an expeditious means of preparing the vehicle for loading. (Library of Congress)

Soldiers ride in a Ford with a prototype body during trials at Camp Holabird, Md. in November 1940. It had a flat hood and headlights recessed behind the grille. The Ford body had stepped edges at the rear of the doorways, a dogleg windshield hinge, and a welded slat grille. This feature carried over to the Ford GP. (Jim Gilmore collection)

Ford won a contract to build 1,500 reconnaissance trucks. The company assigned their model designation GP. This designation came straight from Ford's standard internal model designation system. In Ford's system, G designated government contract vehicle while P indicated an 80-inch wheelbase. (Army Motors)

Ford GPs roll off the production line during the first contract on 1 April 1941. Partly due to its vast manufacturing capacity, Ford was considered the preferred supplier of quarter-ton trucks by some Quartermaster Corps officers. (Army Motors)



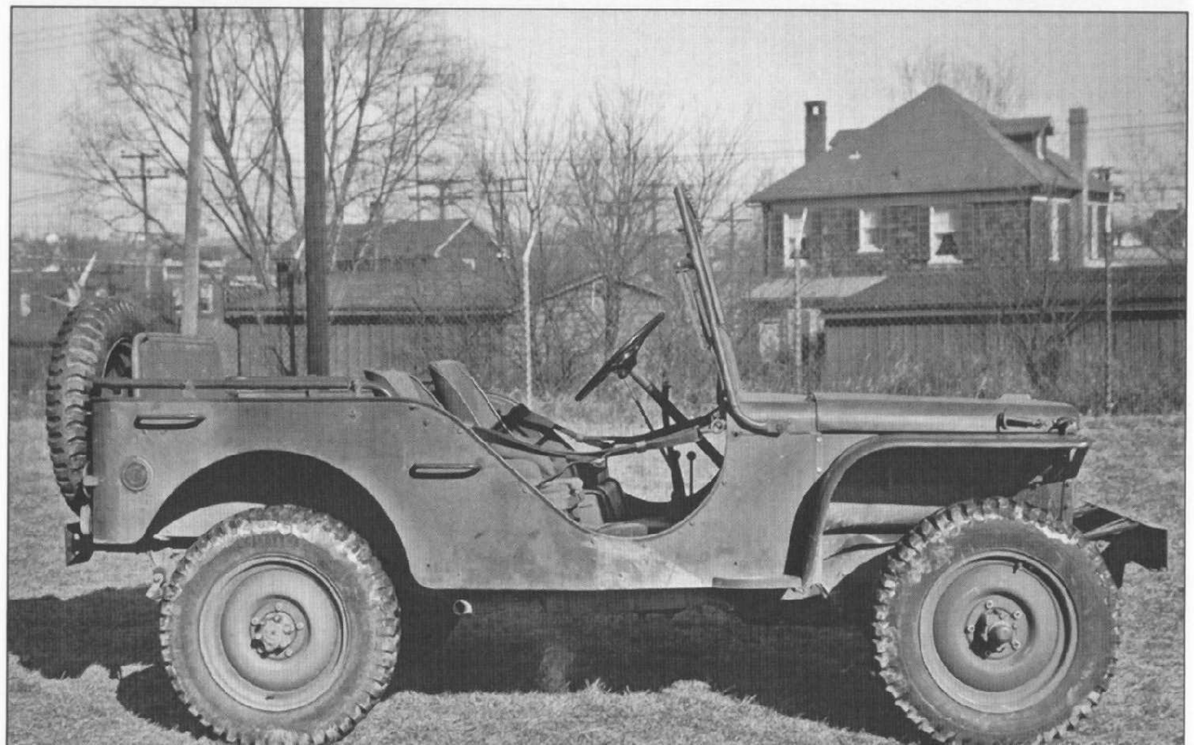
Gen. Bonesteel (front) rides in a GP with Edsel Ford (rear). The GP engine was based on the 45-HP Ford 9N tractor engine driven through a three-speed unsynchronized Ford gearbox. The shift lever was mounted on the floor. (Army Motors)

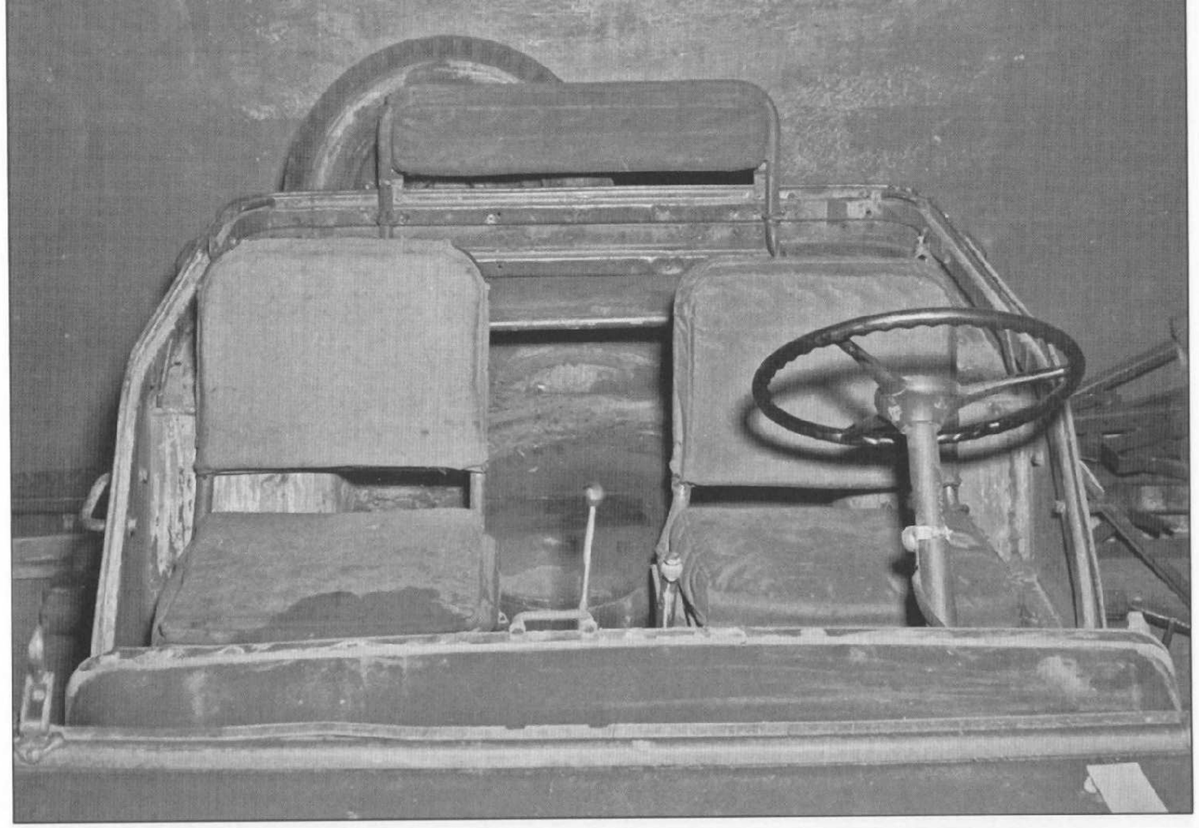
Three strong men lift the front end of a vehicle while a fourth soldier sits on the rear for counterbalance. The vehicle is equipped with early Firestone, "dogleg"-tread NDT tires. The soldier removing the lug nuts wears the shoulder patch of the 1st Armored Division. (Library of Congress)

A GP negotiates a steep gully during an exercise. It features distinctive gussets with cutouts on the bumper, a folded rear-view mirror, one rubber windshield rest on the centerline of the hood, and a safety strap next to the front passenger. (Library of Congress)

This mud-splattered Ford GP, registration number W-234111, was one of 50 GPs fitted with four-wheel steering under Quartermaster Corps contract W-398-QM-10651. This example had two rubber windshield rests on the hood. (Library of Congress)

The registration number hasn't been painted on the hood of this GP yet. Mud sprayed in particular patterns behind the front fender and over the rear wheel well. The bow-bracket wing nuts lack retainer chains on this model. (Military History Institute)





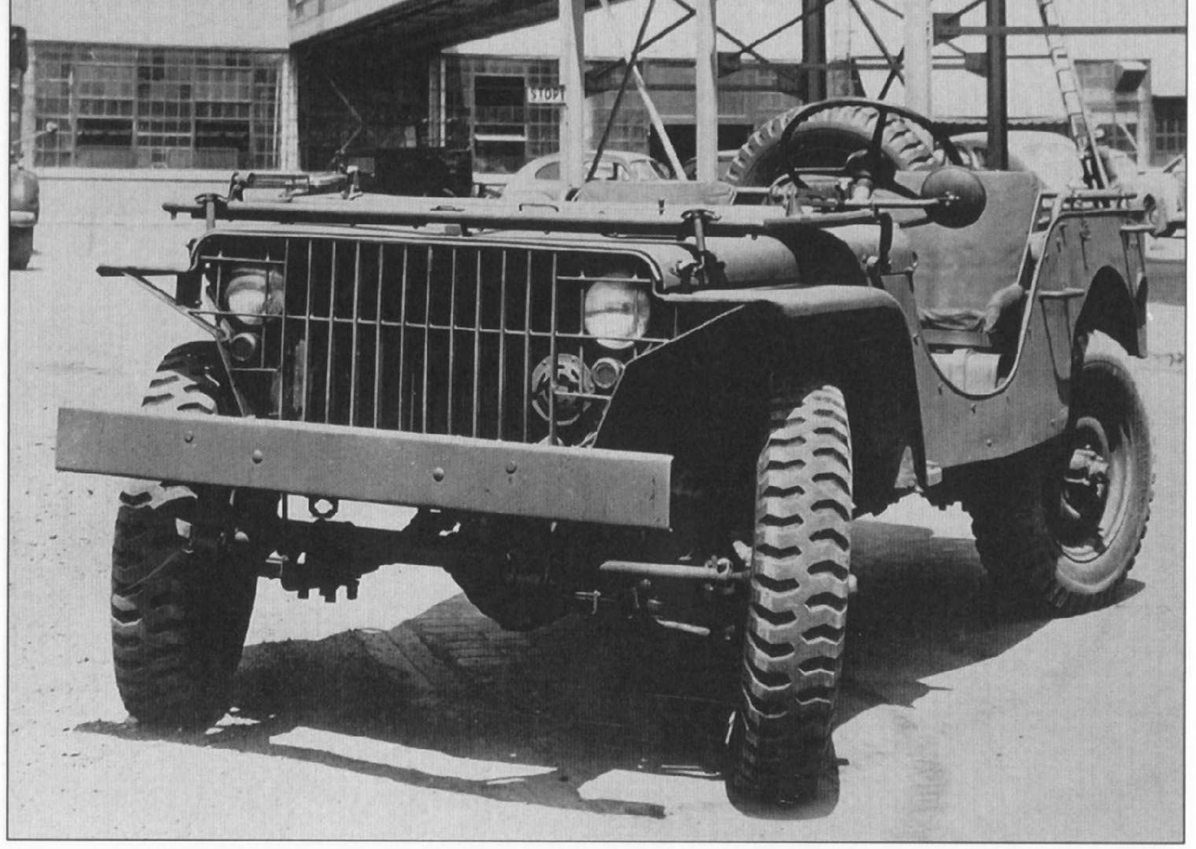
A Marine GP features the canvas top removed and the windshield lowered. The front seats feature modified MB seats instead of the usual GP bucket seats. The windshield latch is located at the lower left, and bolts secure the grab handles inside the body. (USMC)

A GP parks at the front of a mixed line of GPs and GPW/MBs at the Desert Training Center in Indio, Calif. The names "American Ace" and "Angel" are painted over the rear wheel wells of the first two vehicles. The single bow of the GP distinguishes it from the MB/GPW vehicles, such as "Angel," which has two top bows. (National Archives)

A GP goes airborne during Army trials at Camp Holabird. The registration number, W-2017488 signifies this vehicle was produced early in the production run. Ford eventually built 4,458 GP quarter-ton trucks for the governments of the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Brazil, and the Netherlands. (Patton Museum)

The U.S. Marine Corps acquired a single GP. The vehicle had a dual-bow arrangement added. The front bow attaches to the same bracket as the rear one. Webbing straps were also added to keep the front bow in place. The acute angle of the rear bow section is evinced at its lower end. (USMC)

American Volunteer Group pilots sit in a GP in front of Curtiss P-40. John Newkirk (front row from left to right), Henry Geselbracht, James Howard; and (back row) William Bartling and Robert Layher. Squadron Leader Newkirk downed seven enemy aircraft. This GP is a later version with two hood bumpers. These AVG GP's were from the Chinese contract for 1,000 GP's from Ford. The AVG got them from the docks at Rangoon before it fell to the Japanese. Jeeps saw heavy use as general utility vehicles at airfields. One of its frequent duties was ferrying aircrews to flight lines. (George Rodger / Magnum Photos)



This is one of the 50 four-wheel-steer GPs. Although the steering arrangement added maneuverability in tight spots, the additional parts put a strain on the supply system. Consequently, the four-wheel-steering system was discontinued. (Jim Gilmore collection)

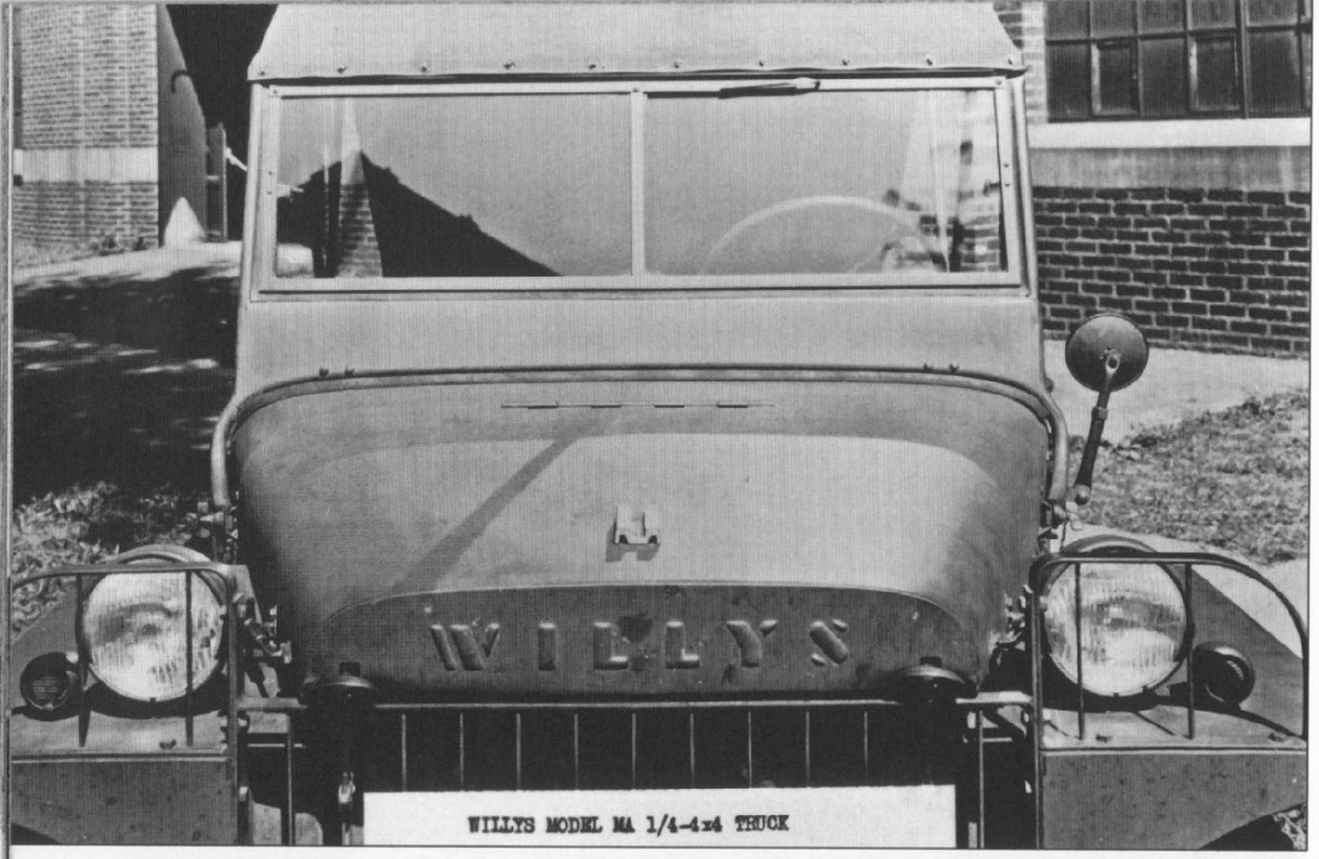
Soldiers decontaminate a GP during training at Fort Knox, Ky. The tires were reclaimed for other uses. The glass and seat cushions are missing. (Patton Museum)

The Willys Quad was the firm's initial prototype attempt to capture the quarter-ton reconnaissance car market. The effort proved successful, although its fender and lighting arrangement were significantly modified on later models. (Ordnance Museum)

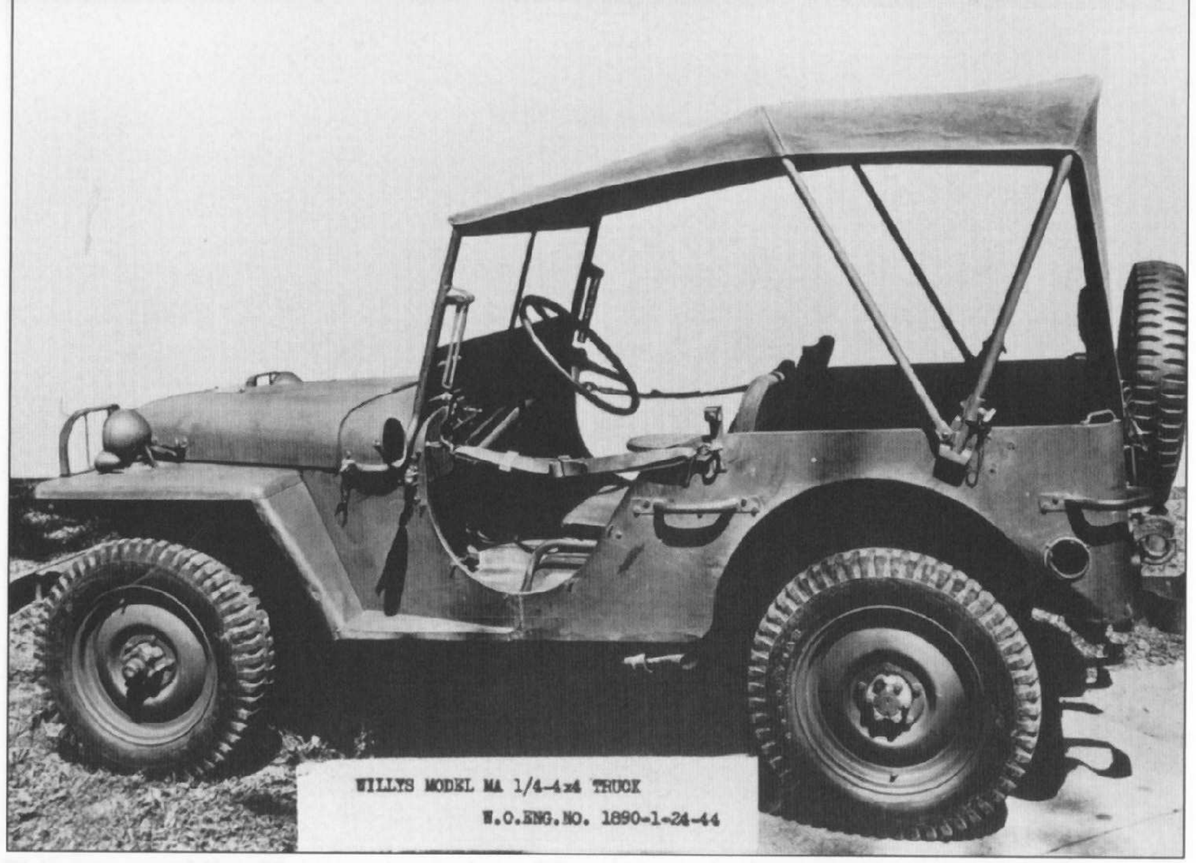
This Quad was rebuilt and utilized a windshield from a Willys MA, which was copied from the Ford GP. The grille differs from the distinctively stamped "Jeep" grille. The stamped grille was also developed later by Ford Motor Company. (Ordnance Museum)

A "Go-Devil" engine powered the Willys pilot model. With an engine displacement of 134.2 cubic inches, the Toledo manufacturer's engine was larger and more powerful than those built into the Bantam or Ford prototypes. The Willys vehicle also featured a column shift mechanism. (Ordnance Museum)

To fill a military contract for 1,500 field trial vehicles, Willys' engineers revamped their quarter-ton and delivered the MA model. The Willys "Go-Devil" engine is often credited as the reason Willys was awarded the contract to build the "standard" Jeep. However, price was the deciding factor because Willys' bid was lower. (Military History Institute)



The name "WILLYS" is embossed on the front of MA hoods. On the MB version, both the embossed logo and fender-mounted headlights were eliminated. This vehicle is fitted with the early "cat's eye" black-out marker lights. The welded slat grille and brush guards are key features of early Willys. (Ordnance Museum)



Production of the MA ended in August 1941. Some vehicles remained at the factory and were scavenged for parts. However, this example remained in use until 1944. The dual-bow tarpaulin-support system is unique to this vehicle. (Ordnance Museum)

An MA is parked near a half-ton and a three-quarter-ton Dodge command cars at Ft. Holabird, Md. in 1941. The MA features curved front fender supports and an upwardly-curved front frame crossmember. Various vehicles transported officers in the field. (Military History Institute)

A soldier and woman sit in a factory-new, late-production MA on the steps of the Willys-Overland administration building as part of a war-bond drive in September 1941. The hood has three rubber bumpers for the windshield rather than one bumper. A Modification Work Order (MWO) was applied to many early MA's for the windshield bumpers. The vehicle lacks a registration number on the hood. (Jim Gilmore collection)

An MA transports soldiers at The Desert Training Center. A tow rope is neatly wrapped around the bumper. A loose-fitting canvas cover encloses the windshield. The vehicle's name, "Cleo," is painted above the rear wheel well. (Library of Congress)

Santa commandeers an MA for Christmas in 1941. The Jeep has been used in many roles beyond the imaginations of the original engineers. Such adaptations of the Jeep have been prevalent since it was first fielded. (Military History Institute)

A soldier briefs two foreign military officers about the MA's engine. The air hose is disconnected from the carburetor. Also visible are the distributor and dipstick/oil filler tube. (Jim Gilmore collection)

Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower (left) and a South American officer (right) pore over a map while sitting in a Willys MA. The tactical sign (AT-1-GP) on the grille is for an anti-tank unit Ike commanded in the war games. The Jeep carries a spare tire with civilian tread and is fitted with unusually large tire chains. The Fleur de Lis is a tactical or unit sign. The Willys features a logo on the hood, upwardly-curved front-frame crossmember, and a steering-column-mounted gear shift. (Jim Gilmore collection)

A 37mm anti-tank gun towed by a Willys MB lifts off the ground after hitting a bump at speed. The Willys MB featured a grille welded from heavy-gauge slats on the first 25,808 examples. This Jeep also has solid disk wheels. After the first 20,700 examples, MBs had combat rims. (Military History Institute)

Soldiers of the 161st Signal Photo Company power a table saw with a belt attached to the front wheel of an MB on blocks at Fort Benning, Ga. around April 1942. (National Archives)

A soldier poses for a portrait at a U.S. Army Engineer unit in England. The unit used a Willys MB as a fire marshal vehicle. It tows a water-pump trailer and a small bell hangs from a bracket mounted on the front fender. The registration number identifies this MB as one of 66,237 built in 1943 under a Quartermaster Contract. (U.S. Army Engineer School History Office)

This slat-grille Willys MB has been fitted as a field ambulance. A tube frame supports a canvas top with red cross markings and storage for two extra stretchers. The outboard pole of the bottom stretcher is attached to hooks on the vertical frame, while the inboard pole is suspended with webbing straps. (Library of Congress)

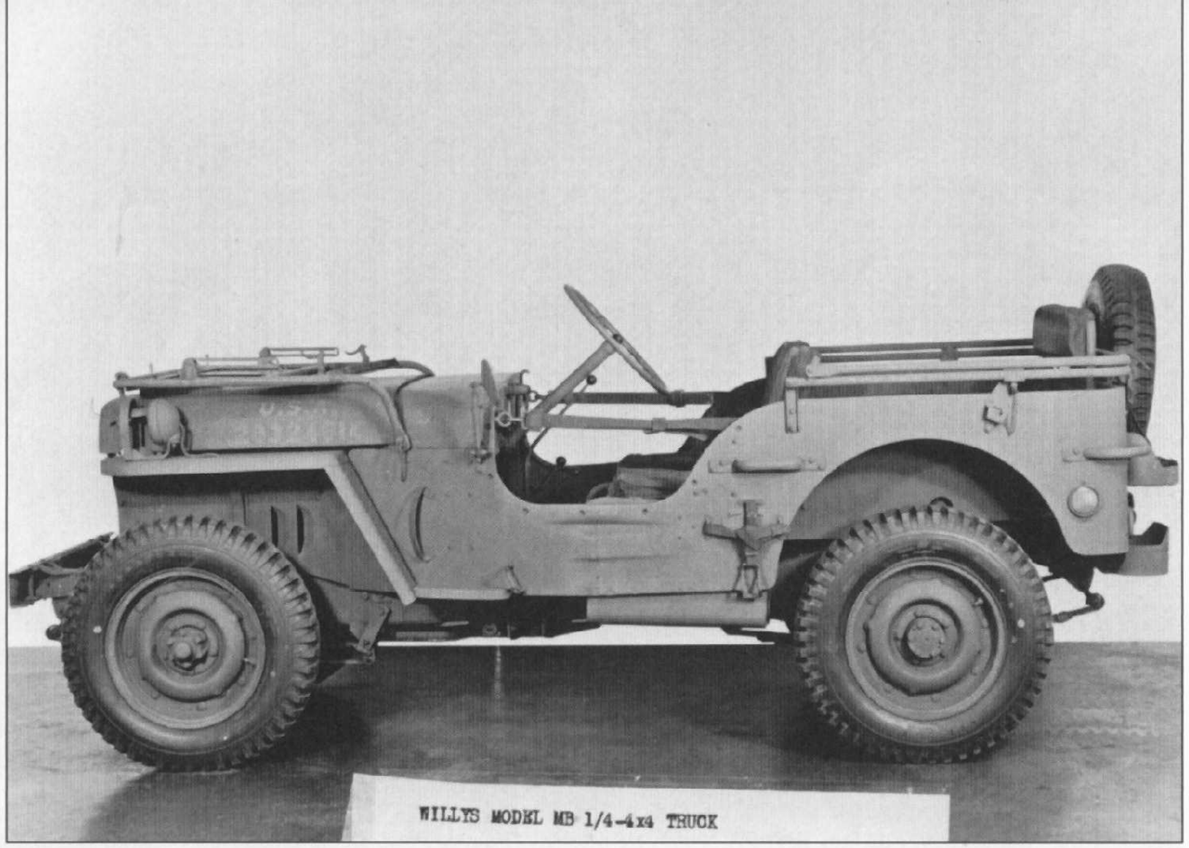
A column of soldiers with the 11th Infantry's 81mm mortar section drive slat-grilled Willys MBs at Fort Custer, Mich. in August 1942. The lead vehicle has hand-operated windshield wiper cranks and its windshield and hood are secured by hold-down clamps. (National Archives photo)

Soldiers hold M1 rifles as they pose for a portrait at a Signal Corps studio in a slat-grille MB. The brown cast to the olive-drab paint is a result of photographic chemistry. (National Archives)

The crew of this slat-grille Willys service the engine. The soldier at left holds an oil can. The smudge inside of the hood may indicate a sudden oil line rupture. A small star is sprayed over the hole for the manual starter crank on the bumper. (Patton Museum)

Marines give a ride to a couple of Solomon Islanders in a slat-grille MB on Guadalcanal as a standard Jeep follows. The windshield has been completely removed on this Jeep and the one passing it. The slat-grille MB was superseded by what could be considered the "standard" MB. The standardized MB incorporated a stamped-steel grille developed by Ford. (USMC)

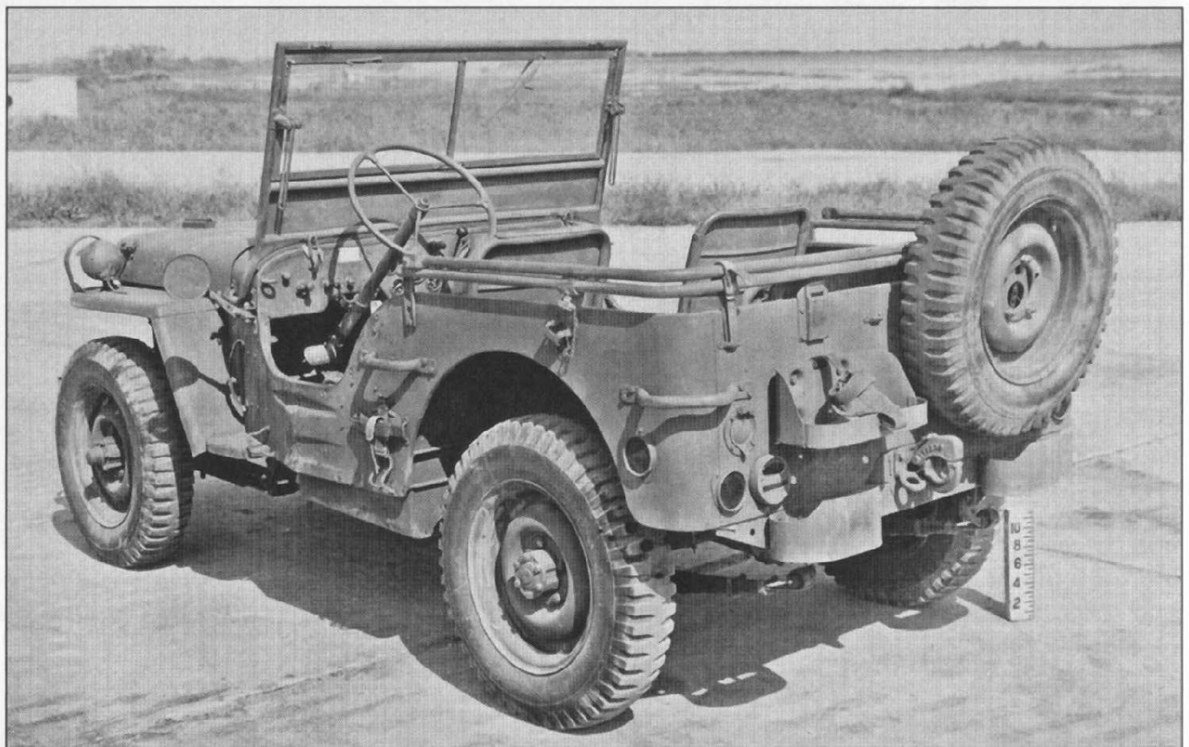
The classic WWII Jeep is typified by this Willys MB, registration number 20324814. The number identifies it as having been produced in 1943 under contract W-2529-QM-650. It has the stamped grille introduced to the MB after 12 June 1942. (Ordnance Museum)



The MB features two louvers in the front wheel well. The grooves, brackets, and straps on the side of the body are for pioneer tools, the retainer chains for the bow and windshield hinge wing nuts. (Ordnance Museum)

The GPW, registration number 20380086, is tested at Aberdeen Proving Ground. It was manufactured in 1943. The bumper markings are repeated on both sides of the hood as "066 / AUTO TEST / ICT." The Ford GPW was, at a glance, identical to the MB, although the two models differ in fine details. (Military History Institute)

The exterior of the GPW was "busier" in appearance than its predecessor, the Ford GP. It featured additions such as the holders for a 5-gallon gas can and pioneer tools, exterior-mounted bow brackets, and a fender-mounted blackout headlight. (Military History Institute)



Football players use a 1942-model Willys MB as the vehicle for a reverse tug-of-war. A small "S" is painted to the rear of the windshield hinge. (National Archives)

Personnel transfer casualties from a makeshift ambulance to a lighter at the Amphibious Training Center in Camp Carrabelle, Fla. during an exercise in December 1942. The rack is fashioned from two-by-four boards. (National Archives)

The foreground Jeep, dubbed "Coon," has a bazooka secured to the cowl with footman loops and leather straps. Knapsacks are arrayed around the rear of the body. A roll of camouflage netting is strapped to the rear of the front fender. The small cutouts in the windshield cover accommodate hold-down clamps. (Patton Museum)

Students pose in a GPW from Headquarters Company of the 12th Armored Division. Jeeps were frequently involved in bond-raising drives and patriotic activities during WWII. This civilian introduction added to the vehicle's mystique. (Patton Museum)

The foreground Jeep, named "Cleveland," is a Ford GPW manufactured in 1942. It is fitted with a radio set and a bazooka rack on the cowl. "C-12" is stenciled on the radio and windshield cover. A small "S" is painted on the side of the cowl. (Patton Museum)

U.S. airmen take a tour of the pyramids in Egypt on 13 December 1942. The eight Jeeps are painted a light color. All have stamped grilles. (National Archives)

A Jeep sits unoccupied at the edge of a muddy slough on a Pacific island. The occupants may have reconsidered crossing the obstacle. (USMC)

A Marine Corps Jeep, registration number 3534, delivers 75mm ammunition to the crew of an M4A1 medium tank somewhere in the Pacific. A .30-caliber Browning machine gun is mounted on an M31 pedestal mount. A 5-gallon can is lashed to the grille. (USMC)

Marines use an Army Jeep to lay communications wires on Mornington Peninsula in Australia in July 1943. The Marine behind the Jeep is wearing a USMC Herringbone twill jacket. The U.S. Marine Corps, like the Army, used the Jeep in a variety of roles. (USMC)

A soldier sleeps instead of manning a .50-caliber machine gun in a 1942 Ford GPW at Camp Maxey, Texas, on 1 August 1943. He was supposed to guard a crossroads during Third Army maneuvers. Hitched to the Jeep is a quarter-ton trailer. The man and Jeep are part of 1st Platoon of the 102nd Recon, 406th Infantry Regiment. (National Archives)

A Signal Company soldier from the 95th Division at Fort Sam Houston strings telephone line using a pike pole from the back of a Jeep at Leon Reservation near San Antonio on 13 April 1943. (Military History Institute)

A Mack NO 7.5-ton prime mover towers over a Jeep at Camp Gruber, Okla. in 1943. The vehicles represent the size range of U.S. wartime wheeled vehicles. The unit marking "3A-985F [national star] HQ-64" is painted on the Jeep's front bumper. (Mack Museum)

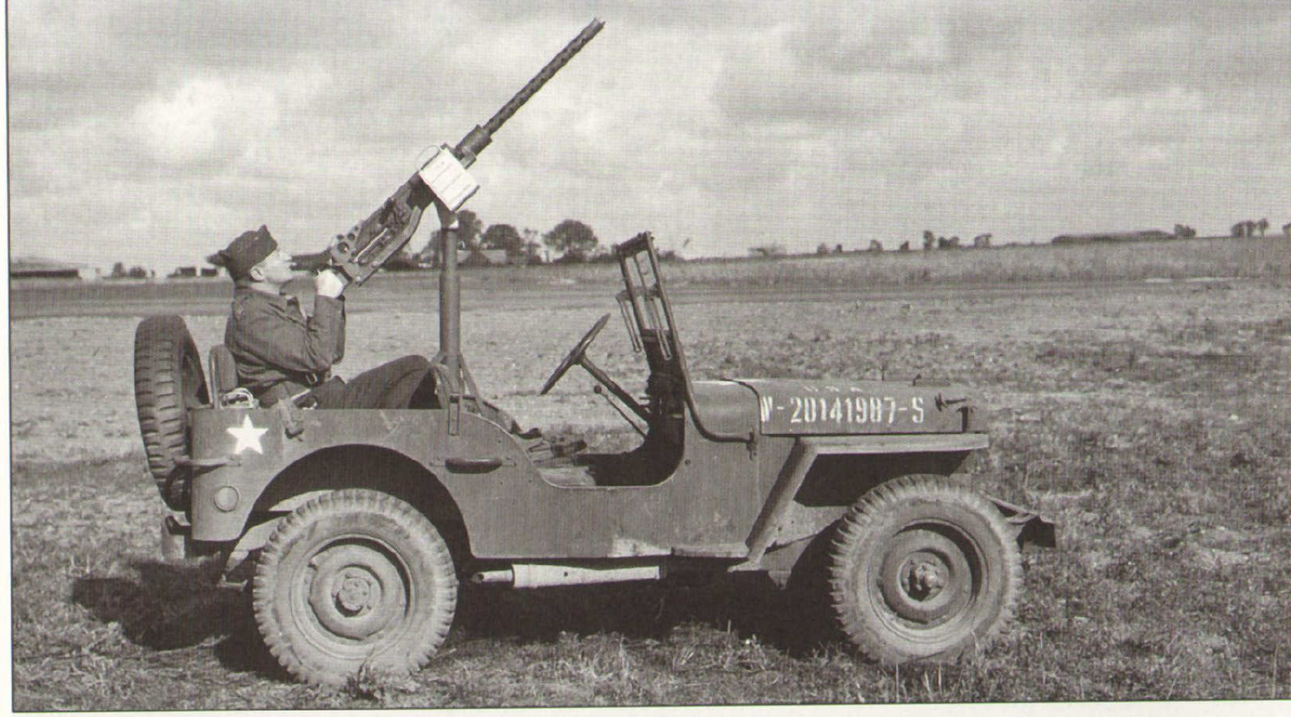
An ordnance heavy-maintenance company operates a Jeep assembly line at Assembly Depot 0-640 in Tidworth, Wiltshire in England on 8 September 1943. It was the only Jeep-assembly facility in England. Partially assembled Jeeps were delivered in crates, and finished Jeeps left the depot every three minutes. (National Archives)

The first step in assembling Jeeps at the Tidworth depot was unpacking the crate containing the body/chassis assembly. The wheels are packed inside the body and secured with steel strapping. (National Archives)

Assembly-line workers attach a windshield to a Willys MB at Tidworth on 8 September 1943. Bows lie inside the vehicles and towing pintles are on the rear seats as a man pushes a cart stacked with wheels farther down the assembly line. (National Archives)

Workers snap canvas onto the top of the Jeep windshield frame at the Tidworth assembly line in England. The cover will then be pulled over the bow, already in place and ready to support the canvas top. The gasoline can holder, spare tire bracket, and rear axle assembly are visible. (National Archives)

A control Jeep prepares to lead a B-24 at an airfield. The mustard-brown area between the star and the surround is a chemical-detecting paint. The paint changes colors when exposed to chemical attack. The canister on the fender is a decontamination cylinder. The U.S. Army Air Forces used Jeeps to guide aircraft to takeoff positions and parking spots on busy, complicated airfields. These Jeeps were called control Jeeps, or "Follow Me" Jeeps. They often had signs stating "Follow Me" on the rear of the vehicles. At forward airfields, the vehicles were painted olive drab. Elsewhere, control Jeeps were painted yellow or checkerboard schemes for high visibility. They usually carried a radio set. (National Archives)



A soldier mans a .50-caliber machine gun on a pedestal mount at Eighth Air Force Station 167, Ridgewell, Essex in England on 14 August 1943. The weapon platform was used for anti-aircraft defense. The "S" after the registration number indicates the vehicle passed a radio-interference suppression test. (National Archives)

A .30-caliber air-cooled Browning machine gun is mounted on an arm extending from a pedestal with a seat and safety belt for the gunner at Eighth Air Force Station 167 on 14 August 1943. The unusual anti-aircraft gun mount was possibly adapted from an aircraft mount. A ring sight is on the side of the arm, and the gunner has an elevating wheel. The gunner could use his legs to traverse the mount. Behind the gunner are two vertical equilibrator springs to counterbalance the weight of the gun. The driver's seat back and the passenger seat have been removed for gunner mobility. (National Archives)

A sheet metal worker inspects the tail of a B-17G from the 615th Bombardment Squadron, 401st Bomb Group, Eighth Air Force, in England on 6 December 1944. He is using a platform on a frame extended from the Jeep's front. Cables support the frame and are secured to eyebolts attached to the bow brackets. (National Archives)

Sgt. Dow Flint examines a stack of two-ton blockbuster bombs from his 1942 Willys MB at the Eighth Air Force Service Command Depot at Sharnbrook, England on 7 July 1943. "PRUXC IV" is stenciled on the windshield frame. The headlights were fitted with British blackout covers. The wheel cap is painted white. (National Archives)

A control Jeep, equipped with a platform at the rear, gives aircraft controllers a better perspective. Spotlights were added to the top of the windshield frame. A nonstandard truck headlight was fitted to the bumper. The Jeep's design was highly adaptive to field requirements. (Patton Museum)

A soldier radios information while another soldier works with a chart. A wire reel holder is on the back of the GPW. Jeeps were well suited for liaison work. When Jeeps were fitted with a radio and teamed with artillery spotters or Air Force close-air-support personnel, these vehicles often tipped the balance in battles. (Fort Monmouth History Office)

A Jeep performs as an ambulance in the Pacific Theater. The front stretcher holder, made from metal bars, is attached to the front bumper and the front fenders' rear. Unit markings are sprayed on canvas and affixed to the bumper. (Military History Institute)

Jeeps and M4 tanks wait to load onto LSTs before the Sicilian invasion at Bizerte, Tunisia in July 1943. A Higgins PT boat (right) undergoes repairs on a stand. (U.S. Navy)

A U.S. Navy GPW is parked in front of two Curtiss SO3C-2 scout/observation airplanes at the Army air base in Kitsap, Washington on 21 December 1943. The front bumper of the Jeep is marked "USN" and "132047". (National Archives)

A Marine Corps Jeep, registration number 40008, drives ashore from a landing craft during training maneuvers in Australia in April 1943. It was rare when the profile of the beach allowed the landing craft to lower its ramp directly onto the beach. (National Archives)

A GPW is parked on the USS Lexington (CV-16) flight deck in November 1943. The Jeep was used as a flight deck tractor during operations in the Gilbert Islands. Unnecessary gear, such as the windshield, the bow, and its brackets, has been removed. A yellow chock was placed under the rear wheel to keep the vehicle from moving with deck pitches. (U.S. Navy)

Pvt. William J. Weinstock radios an aircraft while Pvt. Robert P. Wray sits behind the wheel in Kwajalein on 15 February 1944. A decontamination cylinder is secured on right front fender. A siren is mounted on the right, rear wheel well. "94314-L" is stenciled on the Jeep. The prefix of 94- usually indicates a Navy vehicle. (National Archives)

Soldiers fill 5-gallon water cans in a quarter-ton MBT trailer hitched to a Jeep at the camp of the 115th Engineer Battalion, Cape Hoskins in New Britain on 30 June 1944. The blue-drab registration number suggests the vehicle was a Ford GPW from the 1943 production run. The Jeep features a pedestal mount for a machine gun. (U.S. Army Engineer history office)

Marine Jeeps with quarter-ton trailers line a dock before the Leyte landings. The markings over the rear wheel wells are similarly shaped to a U.S. aircraft national insignia, but have a "G" in the center. Wooden covers above the folded windshields allowed Marines to stack extra gear on the vehicle during landings. This was standard practice for Marine Jeeps. Later, these covers were lighter and fit better. The vehicle hoods are ajar to permit the large air intake hoses, part of a wading kit, to exit the engine compartment. (USMC)

A group of Marines use muscle-power to extricate a Marine Corps ambulance Jeep, commonly called a "Holden Jeep," and its wounded patient from a river bed during the Cape Gloucester campaign on New Britain in 1944. The vehicle's light weight allowed manpower to overcome such obstacles - something not possible with heavier vehicles. (USMC)

Navy personnel rest on the hood of a U.S. Navy Jeep during a convoy pause. (National Archives)

An Army sergeant drives a Jeep up the ramp of an LCT in England before the Normandy Invasion. The red cross flag indicates medics will use it. A 5-gallon can is tied to the grille, a leather scabbard lashed behind the front fender contains a rifle or carbine, and the rear end is piled with wooden crates and tarp-covered cargo. (National Archives)

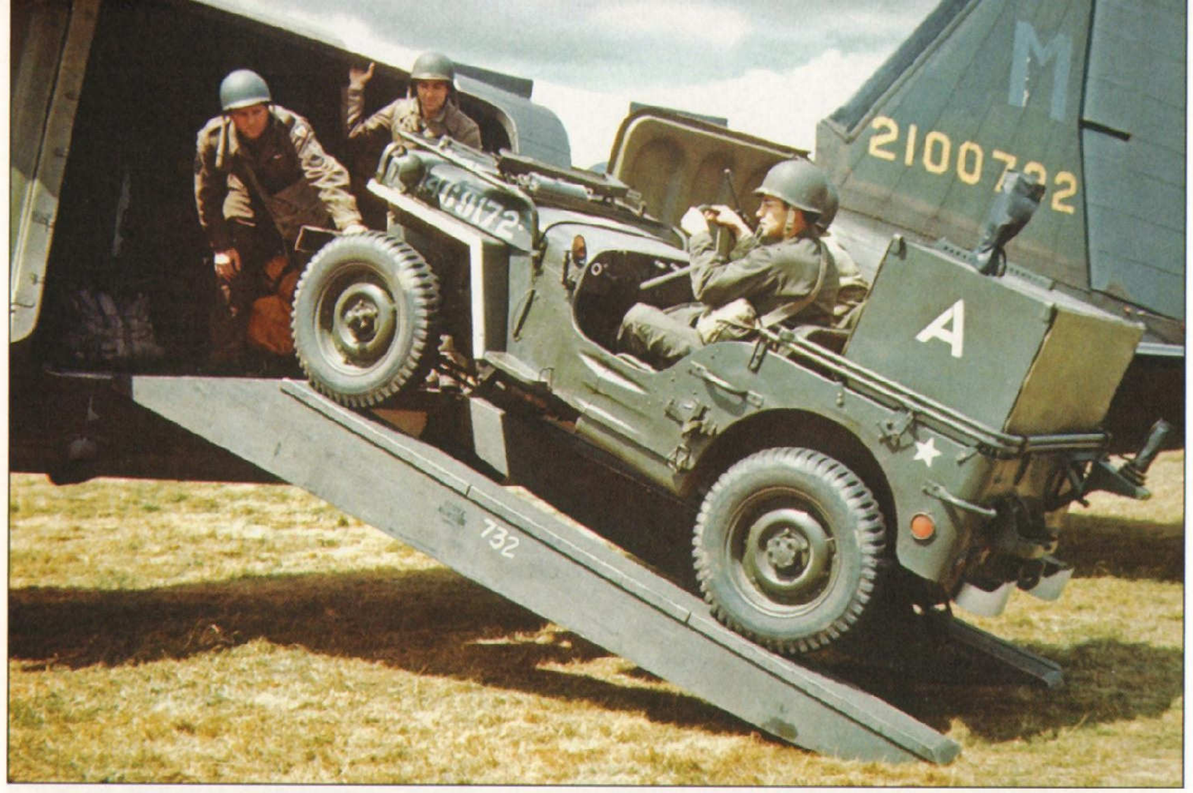
In preparation for the D-Day landings, a U.S. Army Jeep backs onto the deck of an LCT in England. The pipe protruding from the hood on the passenger side is an air intake, part of the wading kit, which allowed vehicles to drive submerged for short distances when the landing craft was unable to discharge them directly on the beach. A wire cutter is mounted on the bumper. (National Archives)

British and U.S. military police caution a XX Corps Jeep full of soldiers before proceeding through a dangerous area on 1 August 1947. XX Corps fought from Normandy to Central Europe. (National Archives)

The crew of "I'll Get By," a B-17G of the 412th Bomber Squadron, 95th Bomber Group, rides to an aircraft in a Jeep in July 1944. The vehicle's spare tire is missing and probably deemed unnecessary for operation on the well-equipped and paved airfield. The bomber was shot down on 3 August 1944. Only three crewmen survived. (National Archives)

A 320th Field Artillery Battalion (Glider), 82nd Airborne Division Jeep emerges from the cargo hold of a CG-4A Waco glider. Wooden gliders were capable of transporting a variety of loads, including one quarter-ton truck. The vehicle's 2/2 bridge weight classification plate indicates an approximate half-ton weight limitation.

A medical team from the 100th Infantry Battalion ride on their ambulance Jeep near the end of World War II. The 100th Infantry Battalion was one of two Japanese-American, or Nisei, combat units in the U.S. Army during the war, the other being the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Serving with the 34th Infantry Division, the 100th saw combat from Anzio to Cassino, Italy and beyond. The battalion was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation. (National Archives)



A radio-equipped Jeep is loaded in the cargo bay of a C-47 transport plane bound for France in 1944. The edge of the Jeep's front fender is painted white, and the numerals of the registration number on the hood use an nonstandard font. (National Archives)

1st Lt. Walter J. Lind of San Francisco elevates his leg on the cowl of a 1943 Willys MB. On the day before D-Day, he suffered a compound fracture of his right leg in a truck accident. After having the leg set in a cast, he landed in Normandy in the Jeep on D-Day and supervised the construction of airfields in France. Weight and dimensional data are stenciled on the side of the body and is typical of many vehicles in Europe. A bazooka lies in the rear of the vehicle. (National Archives)

A Jeep travels through a French city while refugees return shortly after the liberation. A crate is strapped to the hood, a small star is painted at the center of the bumper, and the headlight lenses are sprayed with olive drab paint. (National Archives)

Troops of the 327th Glider Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division back a Jeep into a Waco glider before the Holland assault. (Don F. Pratt Museum)

Maj. Gen. Maxwell Taylor rides in a Jeep in Holland during the last year of World War II. His two-star placard and a roll of camouflage netting are secured to the bumper. (Don F. Pratt Museum)

A trooper examines a Jeep from the 321st Glider Field Artillery Battalion of the 101st Airborne Division in Normandy. The vehicle's right and spare tires are burned. A German jerrycan is stored in the rack. "PRESTONE 44" was painted on the hood to signify the vehicle had been serviced with antifreeze in 1944. (Don F. Pratt Museum)

A Jeep assigned to the American Red Cross in Normandy delivers treats to troops in the field. "ARC" is painted on the bumper and on a placard. The grille is dented, and a small American flag decal is affixed on the windshield. (Don F. Pratt Museum)

A U.S. Army chaplain prepares for a mission in his Jeep while a driver stands nearby. The sign in the chapel window gives times for Protestant services on Sundays. (Patton Museum)

No vehicle could speed on this mud-mired road at the 911th Ordnance Heavy Maintenance Company base near Metz, France on 17 October 1944. The Jeep's registration number, 20496529-S, is a 1943-production Willys MB. "Dottie" is painted on the windshield frame. A toolbox is on the rear fender. (Military History Institute)

A Jeep and a half-ton steel Ben Hur trailer are outfitted as an emergency disaster response rig in April 1944. The placard indicates the unit was used by the port surgeon. The heavy trailer overtaxes the capacity of the Jeep, thus the combination would not be approved by the War Department. (National Archives)

A variety of Red Cross flags, placards, and emblems are displayed on a radio-equipped ambulance Jeep from the 2nd Armored Division in Europe in 1944 or 1945. The front stretcher rack is fabricated from angle irons with large gussets at the bumper. Several designs of stretcher racks were installed on ambulance Jeeps. The spare tire placement by the driver is unusual. (Patton Museum)

A dust-caked Jeep with a complement of soldiers makes its way along a road in hilly terrain. A discarded parachute in the background and a cord looped through the grille's headlight opening to secure stowage indicates these soldiers are Rangers. The rear-view mirror has been removed from its arm. (National Archives)

A column of Jeeps transports vats, crates, and metal containers through a Pacific island jungle. They are probably bringing equipment and supplies to cook for the front lines. Canvas windshield covers protect the glass and eliminate reflections. (National Archives)

A slat-grilled MB, registration number 203978, drives ashore on an Italian beach in 1944. A Jeep tows an MBT quarter-ton trailer as it disembarks from LCT-222 as an LST-1 stands behind. The Jeep is equipped with a wire cutter and wading trunk. (U.S. Navy)

A rather glum tanker sits on the hood of a disabled Jeep. The registration number identifies it as a Willys MB from the 1943 production run. The windshield is broken, the front fender is smashed, and the grab handle on the side is crushed. A .30-caliber machine gun with a form-fitting cover remains on the pedestal mount. (Patton Museum)

A maintenance crew frames the pedestal mount for the .30-caliber machine gun. They may have recently installed the mount on the running board of the Jeep. The soldier (right) wears a shoulder patch of the 1st Armored Division. (Patton Museum)

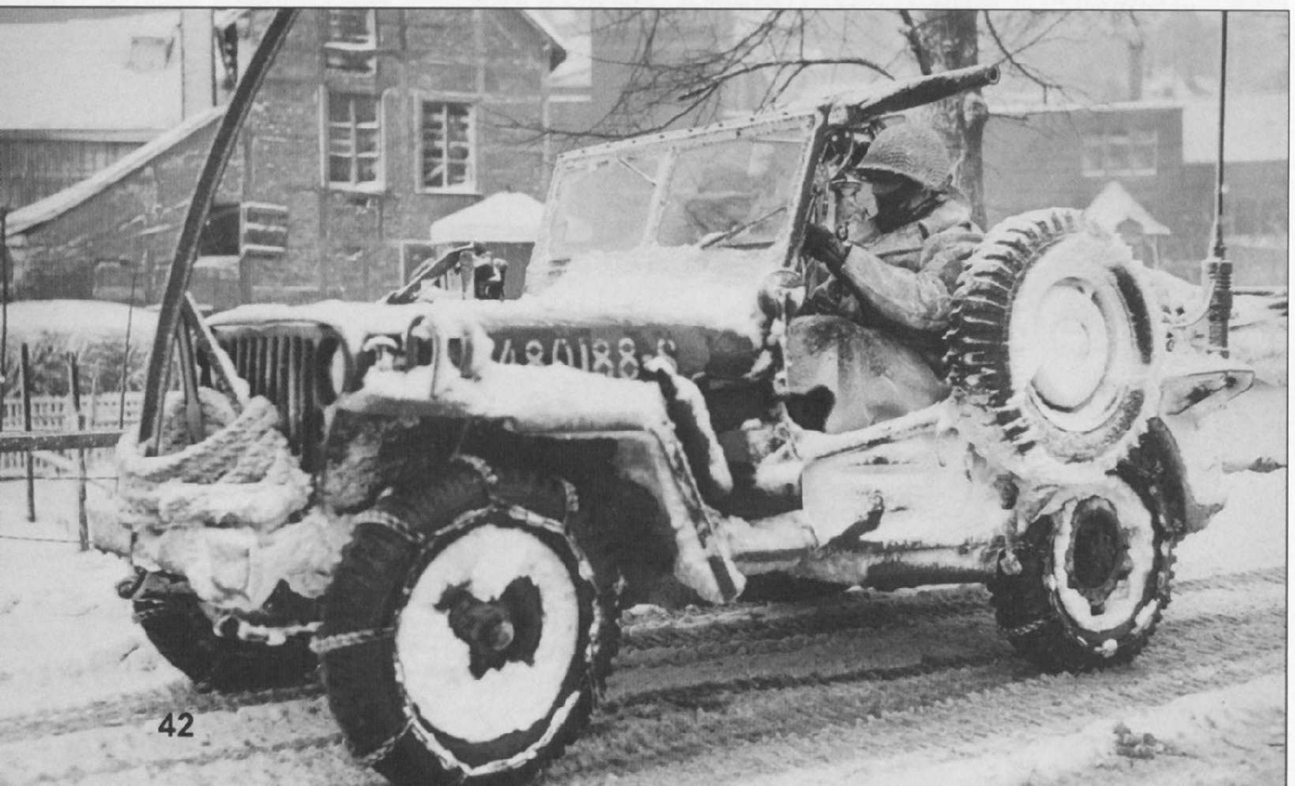
A lineman strings telephone cables while his Jeep is parked below. A bracket holds a cable reel at the rear of the vehicle. An extra tarp was thrown over the canvas top to provide weather protection on the sides. (National Archives)

Soldiers balance a surgeon's Jeep in Belgium. A pole holds a red medical cross flag behind the spare tire. The spare tire is positioned unusually in front of the grille. (Don F. Pratt Museum)

Lt. Gen. George Patton rides in a 1943 Ford GPW in Belgium. The vehicle carries a pedestal-mounted .30-caliber Browning machine gun as well as markers signifying a Third Army lieutenant-general's vehicle. (Don F. Pratt Museum)

A radio-equipped Jeep of the 30th Division drives down a snowy street in Malmedy, Belgium, during the winter of 1944-45. The wire cutter is significantly bowed. A spare tire is mounted behind the driver on the vehicle's side. (Military History Institute)

A convoy moves in the First Army sector near Werbomont, Belgium in the winter of 1944-45. Factory-supplied soft tops were replaced with simple tarps for protection from the elements. The rear Jeep has tire chains. (Military History Institute)



Members of the 327th Glider Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, tour Berchtesgaden, Bavaria. Elements of the regiment assisted in the capture the Eagle's Nest, Hitler's retreat, in Berchtesgaden on 4 and 5 May 1945. (National Archives)

After several years of hard fighting during the war in Europe, troopers of the 327th Glider Infantry Regiment can sightsee in the Bavarian Alps at Berchtesgaden. (National Archives)

A Jeep pulls rolls of bituminous strips for surfacing a Ninth Air Force airstrip in Germany. Aviation engineers of the IX Engineer Command for a Ninth Air Force airfield fabricated these bituminous strips. The Jeep drives over a surface fabricated from Marsden matting, perforated steel strips used to rapidly build temporary airstrips. Engineers use a strip of matting as a sled for the bituminous rolls. (National Archives)

A boy runs past several Jeeps stopped in a war-wracked town in the Rhine River valley in early 1945. The Jeep to the right has two reels of communications cable on a rack at the rear of the vehicle, as well as a German jerrycan in the fuel can rack. The forward Jeep is hitched to a quarter-ton trailer. The canvas top of the Jeep has been detached from the top of the windshield, folded, and laid down over the gear stowed in the rear of the vehicle. (National Archives)

A German shepherd "takes five" on the driver's seat of a Jeep, while a tech sergeant keeps his hands warm. The Willys MB was produced in 1943. This Jeep has an encircled, larger-than-usual star on the hood. The webbing straps for the pioneer tools are caked with mud. (Patton Museum)

Medics remove a seriously wounded soldier from a Jeep to a waiting stretcher. The radio-equipped vehicle is a stock Jeep rather than a field ambulance, which would be fitted with stretcher racks. (Patton Museum)

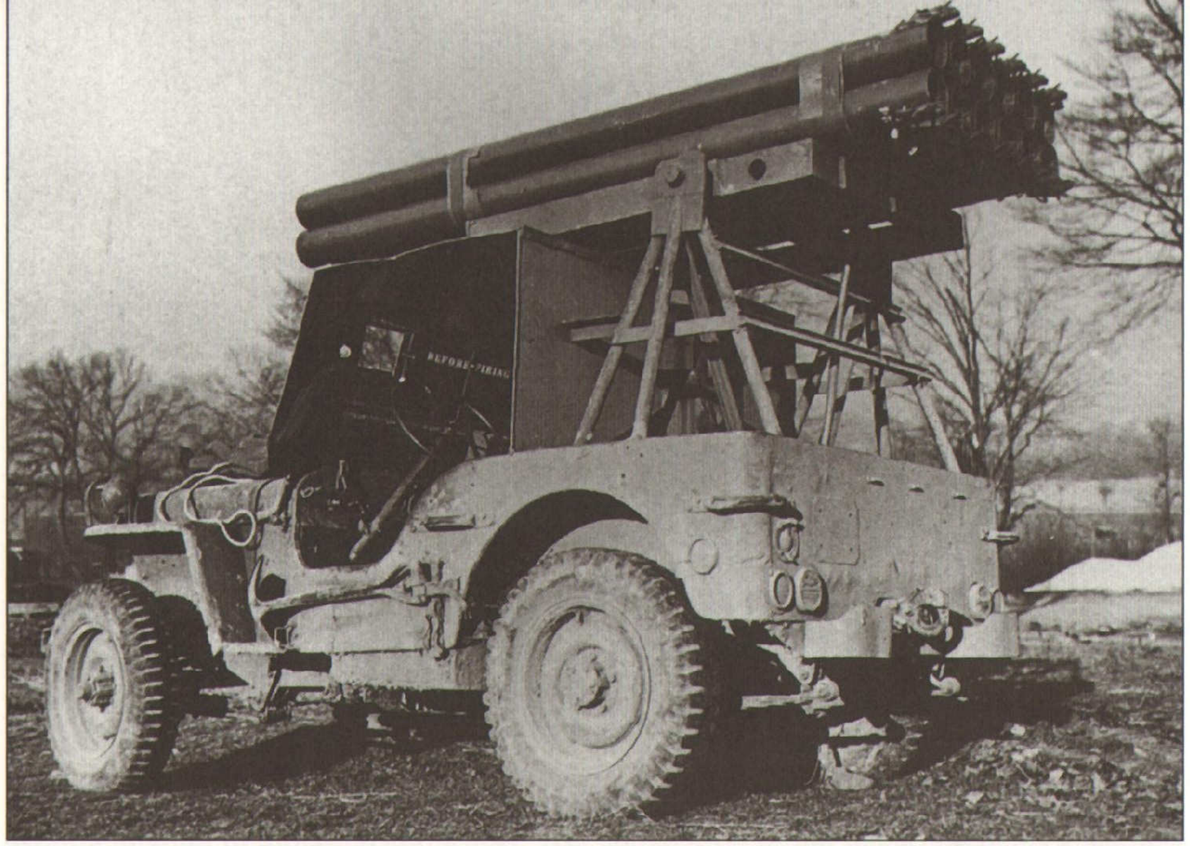
Donald Jensen, a liaison driver with the 2nd Cavalry Group, scrubs down his muddy Jeep in a tributary of the Rhine River at Mayen, Germany on 12 March 1945. The windshield has a field modification with a new frame and bent metal plate. A stock windshield with the hinges cut off was reattached. (National Archives)

Two armored Jeeps pass an abandoned German Jagdtiger tank hunter. The lead Jeep has a placard signifying that it is the vehicle of a brigadier general, while the second Jeep bears two stars of a major general. Both vehicles have armored plates over the windshield assemblies, with two vision slots, and wire cutters. The second Jeep has front fender extensions. (Patton Museum)

Three battle-hardened members of the 7th Armored Division pose momentarily for a portrait in Europe. Shoulder insignia were blacked-out by a censor. As a field modification, a storage bin was added to the rear of the vehicle. A bullet or shrapnel hole dominates the windshield. (Patton Museum)

A mud-caked Jeep parks five kilometers from Koblenz, Germany in early 1945. A camouflage net is casually draped over the gasoline can and spare tire. (Patton Museum)

Chaplain John T. Fournier (left) and his driver enter a Jeep outside a chapel in Europe during World War II. Chaplains provided spiritual counsel to troops throughout the front. The agile Jeep was ideally suited to transport chaplains and the moderate amount of gear they carried. The registration number, which has been painted in a careless pattern, identifies the Willys MB from the 1944 production run. (National Archives)



Few Jeeps were equipped with rocket launchers. Anti-aircraft launchers had twelve 4.5" tubes. A metal enclosure protected the interior10 from the back-blast during firing. (Patton Museum)

A yellow-painted Navy Jeep wears "Beachmaster" markings and guides a C-46 Commando into place at N.A.S. Port Lyautey, Morroco in 1944. All Navy Jeeps were delivered in Army olive drab or Marine Corps green. Jeeps were repainted yellow or gray in the field or at depots. (U.S. Navy)

Pfc. Charles J. Duffley of the 1st Battalion, 21st Marines poses for a portrait beside a trailer of flamethrowers in Iwo Jima. In addition to the spade and axe, a mattock pick is stuck through a grab handle. (National Archives)

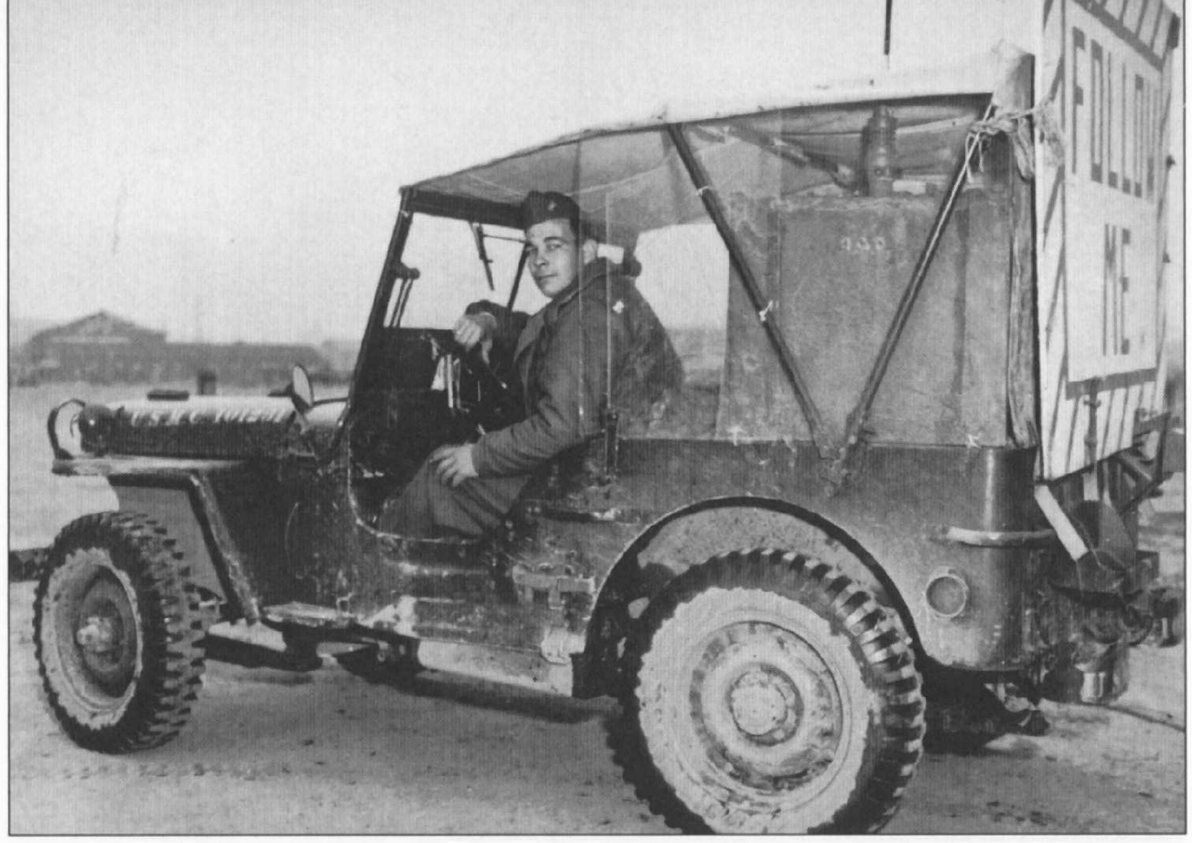
Corpsmen transport wounded Marines on a Holden ambulance Jeep in Iwo Jima. Several casualties are on stretchers, while a wounded man sits on the hood. The Jeep features camouflage paint and a storage box in the passenger door. (National Archives)

A Marine Jeep ambulance speeds several wounded men to a field hospital on Okinawa on 13 May 1945. The corpsman hanging on to the rear of the stretcher frame holds a plasma bottle for the wounded man on the bottom stretcher. The vehicle features a storage bin door on the vehicle's side and a spare tire mount on the hood. A light-colored capital "I" within a circle is marked behind the fender. (National Archives)

A Marine Jeep leads a line of International Harvester M-2-4 one-ton rocket trucks en route to the combat line at Hill 382 on Iwo Jima in 1945. The Jeep, with its spare tire stowed on the hood, pulls a trailer with a camouflage cover. The vehicles are assigned to one of the provisional rocket detachments. Each of the rocket trucks could fire 4.5-inch rockets in ripple salvo of 36. Two Jeep ambulances are among the parked vehicles. (USMC)

A tactical air liaison party detailed to the 40th Division uses a radio in a Jeep to direct air strikes on Japanese positions on Negros Island in the Philippines in July 1943. These personnel would call a strike on specific coordinates and then give corrections to the attack pilots if the first attack missed the target. (National Archives)

A military police Jeep of the 2nd Marine Division patrols a neighborhood in Nagasaki on 28 October 1945. Few neighborhoods escaped atomic bomb destruction in the city. In addition to the "Military Police" placard, the Jeep carries the marking "2D-45434" in several places. A triangular emblem with a "P" in the center is taped to the windshield frame as well. (USMC)



Tech. Sgt. John P. Owens drives the "follow me" Jeep at Marine Air Base Yokosuka in Japan on 1 December 1945. The vehicle carried a radio for communicating with and giving instructions to aviators taxiing around the base. According to notations, this was "the only vehicle with the authority to 'ride herd'" on aircraft landing at the base. Plexiglas panels were installed on the sides of the Jeep to protect the radio from the cold winds and snow. (USMC)

A field-modified 2nd Engineer Battalion Jeep leaves the 2nd Marine Division's rifle range in Nagasaki. The ruins in the background were caused by the atomic bomb blast of 9 August 1945. (USMC)

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